COMMENTARY ON THE

FORTY HADITH

OF AL-NAWAWI

Volume
2

شرح الأربعين النووية

Jamaal al-Din M. Zarabozo

Introduction by
Dr. Jaafar Sheik Idris

AL-BASHEER PUBLICATIONS & TRANSLATIONS
دار البشير للنشر والترجمة

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Hadith #21:
Say, "I believe in Allah and then Stand Firm and Steadfast to that"

عَنْ أَبِي عَمْرٍو وقيل أَبِي عَمْرَةَ سُفْيَانَ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ رَضِيَ
اللهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قُلْ لِي فِي الإِسْلاَمِ قَوْلاً لاَ
أَسْأَلُ عَنْهُ أَحَدًا غَيْرَكَ قَالَ قُلْ آمَنْتُ بِاللَّهِ فَاسْتَقِمْ

On the authority of Abu Amr— and it also said Abu Amrah— Sufyaan ibn Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: I said, "O Messenger of Allah, tell me a statement about Islam such that I will not have to ask anyone other than you." He answered, "Say, 'I believe in Allah,' and then stand firm and steadfast to that."
(Recorded by Muslim.)

Selected Vocabulary

قولا	- "a statement, words"
أسأل	- "I ask"
عنه	- "about it"
غيرك	- "other than you"
آمنت	- "I have believed"
استقم	- "being steadfast, upright," see below for complete definition

Takhreej

This is an authentic hadith. It was recorded through a number of chains from Sufyaan ibn Abdullah. Muslim, Ahmad, ibn Mandah in *al-Imaan*, ibn Hibbaan, al-Baihaqi and others recorded it on the authority of Urwah ibn al-Zubair from Sufyaan. Muslim recorded this hadith and noted that the wording from Abu Usaamah is, "ask anyone after you," rather than, "ask anyone other than you."[1] Furthermore, the wording in some of the published editions of

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[1] See al-Nawawi, *Sharh Saheeh*, vol. 1, p. 64. This is another example of how careful Imam Muslim was when it came to recording the exact words of the different narrators.

Sahih Muslim is, ثم استقم instead of فاستقم. In essence, the meaning is the same in both of these wordings.[1]

Muhammad ibn Abdul Rahmaan ibn Maaiz[2] also narrated this hadith from Sufyaan. His narration has been recorded by al-Tirmidhi, al-Nasaai in *al-Kubra*, ibn Maajah, Ahmad, al-Tabaraani, ibn Hibbaan, al-Haakim and others.

Abdullah ibn Sufyaan al-Thaqafi also narrated this hadith from his father Sufyaan. His narration has been recorded by al-Nasaai in *al-Kubra*, Ahmad, al-Daarimi and others.[3]

The reports from Muhammad ibn Abdul Rahmaan and Abdullah ibn Sufyaan have additional words that are important.[4] The following are the additional words found in the narration from Muhammad but not in the narration from Urwah ibn al-Zubair:

يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَا أَخْوَفُ مَا تَخَافُ عَلَيَّ فَأَخَذَ بِلِسَانِ نَفْسِهِ ثُمَّ قَالَ هَذَا

[Sufyaan then said,] "O Messenger of Allah, what is the thing that you fear most for me?" He [the Prophet (peace be upon him)] took hold of his own tongue and said, "This." (The meaning of Abdullah ibn Sufyaan's narration is virtually the same.)

General Comments About This Hadith

This hadith is another instance in which a few words of the Prophet (peace be upon him) have expressed the entirety of Islam: *Imaan* and *istiqaamah*. Islam is based on *tauheed* and obedience to Allah. *Tauheed* is captured in the belief in Allah and obedience is captured in *istiqaamah*.[5]

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) was asked to state something that would be sufficient for the person, such that he would not have to ask anyone afterwards, and the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave this reply to him. If a person adheres to this hadith properly, he will be applying his Islam in a proper manner.

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[1] The wording ثم استقم seems to be the correct wording. Indeed, it is the wording that is mentioned in the commentaries to the hadith, such as those by al-Nawawi, al-Ubayy and al-Sanoosi.

[2] According to ibn Hajr, Muhammad ibn Abdul Rahmaan ibn Maaiz is *maqbool*. (Ibn Hajr records him under Abdul Rahmaan ibn Maaiz, as that is one report as to his name.) In other words, if there is supporting evidence for his narration, it is accepted; otherwise, it is not. [See ibn Hajr, *Taqreeb al-Tahdheeb*, p. 597.] It is important to mention this here because he is the narrator who narrated the additional words that shall be noted below. However, he has corroborating evidence for that narration in the narration from Abdullah ibn Sufyaan.

[3] Cf., ibn Muhammad, pp. 149-150.

[4] In their narratives, they also stated, "Allah is my Lord," instead of, "I have believed in Allah."

[5] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 180; al-Qaari, vol. 1, p. 84.

About the Narrator: Sufyaan ibn Abdullah

Sufyaan ibn Abdullah al-Thaqafi was a Companion of the Prophet (peace be upon him) who came from Taif. He embraced Islam with the delegation from Thaqeef. Umar ibn al-Khattaab put him in charge of collecting the *zakat* from the people of Taif. Five hadith have been recorded on his authority. This is the only narration from him found in *Sahih Muslim.*

"O Messenger of Allah, tell me a statement about Islam such that I will not have to ask anyone other than you."

In this hadith, the person asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) to tell him something concise about Islam. It was to be such a comprehensive statement that the person would not have to ask anyone after he asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) this question. In addition, the statement must be so clear that the person would not be in need of getting any further explanation after getting the response from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him).[1] In other words, both its comprehensiveness and its clarity should be such that the person would not be in need of asking anyone other than or after the Prophet (peace be upon him).[2]

Obviously, he was not asking about all of the rules and principles of Islam. Such cannot be condensed into one statement. However, he was asking him for a general principle that could guide him in his Islam. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told him a statement that was so comprehensive that it summarized his mission of twenty-three years.[3]

He answered, "Say, 'I believe in Allah'..."

In his comprehensive response, the Prophet (peace be upon him) told him to, "Say..." Here, the point is not simply a statement upon the tongue. It can be proven through other evidences[4] that a mere statement with the tongue without belief in the heart does not avail a person in any way. Hence, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was telling the person, "Say, with true conviction and belief in your heart..."

The Prophet (peace be upon him) told him to say, "I believe in Allah." In other reports, the wording is, "My Lord is Allah." In other words, the first principle or foundation is to have correct belief in Allah, known as *tauheed.* This implies the correct and true belief in Allah. The expression "belief in Allah" is one of those expressions that the *shareeah* has given its own unique and particular meaning to.[1] The meaning of it is not the same as when, for example, the polytheistic Arabs at the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to say, "We believe in Allah." Nor is its meaning the same as what many people today mean when they say, "We believe in God."

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[1] Al-Sindi, *Sharh al-Arbaeen*, p. 74.

[2] Al-Ubayy, vol. 1, p. 134.

[3] Al-Ubayy, vol. 1, p. 134.

[4] This other evidence was discussed under the conditions of the testimony of faith, in the commentary to Hadith Number 3.

"and then stand firm and steadfast to that."

After having the correct belief in Allah, one must remain steadfast in that belief. This means, as stated by al-Qaadhi Iyaadh, that one must not swerve from that proper belief in any form whatsoever. One must adhere to that belief by fulfilling what it obligates and remaining away from what it forbids. One must continue in this path until death comes. After stating the above, al-Qaadhi Iyaadh stated, "What we have stated is the explanation of most of the Companions and those who came after them. It is the correct meaning of the hadith, Allah willing."[2]

One must remain steadfast to the belief in Allah and all that it implies. This includes remaining steadfast to one's belief in the Prophet (peace be upon him) and following his way. It also includes remaining steadfast with respect to the prayers, fasts, pilgrimage and so forth.[3]

The Meaning of the Word "then" (ثم)[4]

The meaning of the word "then" in this hadith implies that first one must have the proper belief in Allah. Without this proper belief, the following actions will be of no beneficial consequence. One must first start with this essential foundation. This essential foundation, however, must be followed up by constancy and steadfastness to the essential foundation itself.

Both of these are essential and necessary aspects. The proper belief in Allah followed by straying from that belief will be of no benefit to the individual. Similarly, steadfastness to an incorrect or false belief in Allah will also be of no benefit. This is why it is of extreme importance to ensure that one's beliefs about Allah and one's *imaan* are correct. For a person's deeds to be accepted by Allah, his *imaan* must first be sound and correct.[5]

Another interpretation for "then" in this hadith is that it is in reference to "rank" or merit. In other words, one starts out with the belief in Allah and then one moves on to the higher degree or stage, wherein one has steadfastness and constancy in that belief.[6]

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[1] The correct and true belief in Allah was discussed in detail in the commentary to Hadith Number 2.

[2] Quoted in al-Nawawi, *Sharh Saheeh*, vol. 1, p. 64. Cf., al-Ubayy, vol. 1, p. 134.

[3] Ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 2, p. 532.

[4] Again, it seems that the wording found in *Sahih Muslim* is ثم استقم and not فاستقم.

[5] Cf., ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 2, p. 532.

[6] Al-Ubayy, vol. 1, pp. 134-135, offers both explanations without stating any strong preference for either. Ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 2, p. 532, only offers the first explanation.

The Implication of the Imperative

In this hadith, a believing Muslim has come to the Prophet (peace be upon him) with the hopes of getting comprehensive and clear guidance. In his response, the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered him to say, "I believe in Allah." What is the meaning of this order directed toward someone who was already a believer? The scholars have offered two responses to this question.

The first response is that the Prophet's statement is in the same vein as the Quranic verse directed to the believers,

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ ءَامِنُواْ بِٱللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِۦ وَٱلۡكِتَٰبِ ٱلَّذِي نَزَّلَ عَلَىٰ
رَسُولِهِۦ وَٱلۡكِتَٰبِ ٱلَّذِيٓ أَنزَلَ مِن قَبۡلُۚ

"O believers! Believe in Allah, and His Messenger, and the Book which He has sent down to His Messenger, and the Scripture which He sent down to those before" (*al-Nisaa* 136). This verse is a command to renew and confirm the faith that one has already possessed. This is what the Prophet (peace be upon him) was telling this Companion in this particular hadith.

A second explanation is that the Prophet's response was a message to every human that the key to salvation in the Hereafter is belief in Allah and remaining steadfast in that belief. Hence, the Prophet (peace be upon him) simply used that question as a means to express a general instruction for all of mankind. With respect to the inquiring Companion, the first part was simply a reminder while the second part stressing steadfastness is the message that the Prophet (peace be upon him) wanted to convey to him in particular.[1]

The Meaning of *Istiqaamah*

The Prophet (peace be upon him) told his Companion, "Say, 'I believe in Allah,' and then *istaqim*." Another way of expressing this in English would be, "Say, 'I believe in Allah,' and then have the characteristic of *istiqaamah*."

Like the concept of *hayaa`* in the previous hadith, the concept of *istiqaamah* is very important. An in-depth understanding of the concept of *istiqaamah* will lead to a greater understanding of this hadith..

Lexically, the supplement to Lane's *Lexicon* has defined the word *istiqaam* in the following fashion,

> It became right; direct; in a right state; straight; even; tended toward the right, or desired, point, or object; had a right direction, or tendency; was regular. استقام على طريق الحق He

---

Personally, this author prefers the first explanation given above, in agreement with ibn Uthaimeen.

[1] Cf., al-Baitaar, pp. 132-133.

> continued in the way of truth, or the right way... إستقام He, or it, was, or became, right, direct, rightly directed, undeviating, straight, or even; and he, or it, stood right, or straight, or erect. He went right on, straight on, or undeviatingly... إستقام على الطريقة he went on undeviatingly in the way. He went right; pursued a right course, acted rightly or justly...[1]

Furthermore, the meaning of the root word for *istiqaamah* implies something that is straight, allowing for no crookedness or swerving. In *Surah Hud* verse 112, the Quran juxtaposes *istiqaamah* with *tughyaan* (طغيان), *tughyaan* implies going beyond the proper bounds in any matter.[2]

The word *istiqaamah* is also derived from the stem *qiyaam* (قيام). This stem implies continuance, guarding over something and constancy. It also implies checking into a situation, following up and making sure something is right and good. This is the usage of the related term in the verse of the Quran,

ٱلرِّجَالُ قَوَّٰمُونَ عَلَى ٱلنِّسَآءِ

"Men are in charge (*qawwaamoon*) over women" (*al-Nisaa* 34). From this root, one understands that *istiqaamah* is not merely the practice of following the straight path. Beyond that, it implies the adhering and constant attachment to that straight path. One tries to cling to it and stay within its limits at all times, to the best of his ability.[3]

A number of definitions for the *shareeah* understanding of the word *istiqaamah* have been passed on from the early generations of Islam. For example, Abu Bakr was quoted as saying that it refers to not associating any partner with Allah. In another narration, he stated that it implies that a person does not turn to anyone other than Allah. Abu al-Aaliyah stated that it means that the person then makes his religion and deeds purely for the sake of Allah. Qataada stated that it means that a person remains continual in his obedience to Allah.[4]

These statements are different expressions of what *istiqaamah* entails. A good comprehensive definition of *istiqaamah* is given by ibn Uthaimeen, "*Istiqaamah* is for a person to affirm himself upon the law of Allah in the manner that Allah has ordered him, all being preceded by true sincerity and purity to Allah."[5] Another good comprehensive definition of *istiqaamah* is given by ibn Rajab, who stated,

> *Al-Istiqaamah* is the following of the Straight Path, it is the straight and proper religion, without any turning to the right or

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[1] Lane, vol. 2, p. 2996.
[2] Ibn al-Qayyim, *Madaarij*, vol. 2, p. 104.
[3] Cf., Salaah al-Tunoobi, "*al-Istiqaamah wa al-Ihsaan min Makaarim al-Akhlaaq fi al-Islaam,*" *Majallat al-Buhooth al-Islaamiyyah* (No. 22, Rajab-Shawaal 1408 A.H.), pp. 289-290.
[4] Quoted in ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 1, p. 508.
[5] Ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 2, p. 528.

left. It encompasses performing all of the acts of obedience, both the external and the internal of them. It similarly implies abandoning all of the forbidden acts. Therefore, [this advice from the Prophet (peace be upon him) to Sufyaan] is advice that encompasses all of the features of the religion.[1]

Istiqaamah in the Quran

In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) reiterated a message that is found in a number of places in the Quran. Indeed, he has reiterated a verse that was addressed specifically to him in more than one place in the Quran, but its message applies to all Muslims. Allah said to the Prophet,

فَٱسْتَقِمْ كَمَآ أُمِرْتَ وَمَن تَابَ مَعَكَ وَلَا تَطْغَوْاْ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

"Therefore, stand firm [on the straight path] as you are commanded and those who turn in repentance with you. And do not transgress [from that straight path], for He sees well all that you do" (*Hood* 112).

Allah also said to the Prophet (peace be upon him),

فَلِذَٰلِكَ فَٱدْعُ ۖ وَٱسْتَقِمْ كَمَآ أُمِرْتَ ۖ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَآءَهُمْ

"So unto this [religion] invite [the people]. Stand steadfast as you are commanded and do not follow their desires" (*al-Shoora* 15). In this verse, remaining steadfast to the path of Allah has been directly juxtaposed with following the desires of the People of the Book who strayed from the original teachings of their prophets. This implies that following a way other than what the Prophet (peace be upon him) brought is the very antithesis of the *istiqaamah* that is ordered in this verse.

If someone truly seeks to fulfill the requirements of *istiqaamah*, he should turn to the Quran for the Quran has been revealed for that purpose. Allah says,

إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِّلْعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾ لِمَن شَآءَ مِنكُمْ أَن يَسْتَقِيمَ

"It is not except a reminder to the worlds for whoever wills among you to take a right course (*yastaqeem*)" (*al-Takweer* 27-28).

In two places in the Quran, Allah has stated the result of the proper *istiqaamah* that the Prophet (peace be upon him) mentioned to Sufyaan in this hadith (stating one's belief in Allah and then *istiqaamah*). Allah says in the Quran,

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[1] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 1, p. 510. Al-Qurtubi and ibn Katheer have also given good comprehensive definitions. See Sultaan, p. 186.

إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ قَالُوا۟ رَبُّنَا ٱللَّهُ ثُمَّ ٱسْتَقَـٰمُوا۟ تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ ٱلْمَلَـٰٓئِكَةُ أَلَّا
تَخَافُوا۟ وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا۟ وَأَبْشِرُوا۟ بِٱلْجَنَّةِ ٱلَّتِى كُنتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾ نَحْنُ
أَوْلِيَآؤُكُمْ فِى ٱلْحَيَوٰةِ ٱلدُّنْيَا وَفِى ٱلْـَٔاخِرَةِ ۖ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهِىٓ أَنفُسُكُمْ
وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَدَّعُونَ ﴿٣١﴾ نُزُلًا مِّنْ غَفُورٍ رَّحِيمٍ

"Verily, those who say, 'Our Lord is Allah [alone],' and stand firm and steadfast, on them will descend angels [at the time of their death, saying], 'Fear not, nor grieve! But receive the glad tidings of Paradise which you have been promised. We have been your friends and protectors in the life of this world and are [so] in the Hereafter. Therein you shall have [all] that your souls desire, and therein you shall have [all] that you ask. A hospitable gift from [Allah], the Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful'" (*Fussilat* 30-32).

The important message of the above verse and this hadith is also mentioned in the following verse:

إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ قَالُوا۟ رَبُّنَا ٱللَّهُ ثُمَّ ٱسْتَقَـٰمُوا۟ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ
﴿١٣﴾ أُو۟لَـٰٓئِكَ أَصْحَـٰبُ ٱلْجَنَّةِ خَـٰلِدِينَ فِيهَا جَزَآءًۢ بِمَا كَانُوا۟ يَعْمَلُونَ

"Verily, [for] those who say, 'Our Lord is Allah [alone]' and thereafter stand firm and steadfast, on them shall be no fear nor shall they grieve. They will be the inhabitants of Paradise, abiding therein [forever]. [This is their] recompense for what they used to do" (*al-Ahqaaf* 13-14).

One can see from this verse that the rewards for those who believe properly and then remain steadfast to that belief are many. They include: (1) Having the support of the angels in both this life and the Hereafter; (2) At the time of death, a harsh and difficult time, angels will come with glad tidings to relieve any distress; (3) The person will be led to Paradise wherein he may have all that his soul desires; (4) Such people will be in Paradise forever; (5) Allah will be pleased with them and will shower them with His blessings.

One can understand from this how appropriate the Prophet's advice was to Sufyaan. What he told him was sufficient to steer him to the path that will lead him and everyone who follows it to Paradise. It is the path of true belief and *istiqaamah.*

The *Istiqaamah* of the Heart and of the Tongue

The key to *istiqaamah*—- being upright and steadfast along the Straight Path— is soundness of the heart. The heart must be firmly set upon *tauheed.* It must be filled with the fear of Allah, love for Him and awe of Him. If the heart is righteous, then the rest of the body will follow, since its limbs, organs and other parts are simply soldiers of what is in the heart.

Ibn al-Qayyim points out that the heart will not achieve *istiqaamah* until two conditions are met: First, the person must love Allah more than any other person or thing that he loves. He says that this is very easy to claim but very difficult to put into practice. When a person is tried by Allah, the truth is revealed. Many times, it turns out that the person actually loves his desires, his parents, his wife, his leader, his *shaikh* and so on more than he loves Allah. When this occurs, *istiqaamah* will be unachievable as it is the way of Allah to test His slaves in this world. The second aspect is for the heart to have a great deal of respect for the commands and prohibitions of the *shareeah*. This great deal of respect comes about by showing respect to the One who laid down those commands and prohibitions. The person must always keep in mind who laid down the laws of the *shareeah*. When this is deeply rooted in his heart, he will then show the proper respect for those laws. If he is, however, neglectful of who the Lawgiver is, it becomes easier for his heart to stray.[1]

After the heart, there is one thing that is particularly important for a believer to guard over and make sure that it does not stray from what is right. This is the tongue. The statements of one's tongue can be very damaging and can lead a person away from the proper *istiqaamah*. Many times, a person may not realize the damage that he has done to himself by his own statements. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) made this point clear when he said,

إِنَّ الْعَبْدَ لَيَتَكَلَّمُ بِالْكَلِمَةِ مِنْ رِضْوَانِ اللَّهِ لا يُلْقِي لَهَا بَالاً يَرْفَعُهُ اللَّهُ بِهَا دَرَجَاتٍ وَإِنَّ
الْعَبْدَ لَيَتَكَلَّمُ بِالْكَلِمَةِ مِنْ سَخَطِ اللَّهِ لاَ يُلْقِي لَهَا بَالاً يَهْوِي بِهَا فِي جَهَنَّمَ

"A person makes a statement that is pleasing to Allah although he did not give it much concern. [Due to it] Allah raises his rank. And a person makes a statement that is displeasing to Allah although he did not give it much concern. [Due to it], he is flung into the Hell-fire." (Recorded by al-Bukhari.)

In another hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

مَنْ يَضْمَنْ لِي مَا بَيْنَ لَحْيَيْهِ وَمَا بَيْنَ رِجْلَيْهِ أَضْمَنْ لَهُ الْجَنَّةَ

"Whoever guarantees for me what is between his jawbones and what is between his legs [that is, whoever can guarantee that his tongue and private parts will not be involved in forbidden acts], then I guarantee for him Paradise." (Recorded by al-Bukhari.)

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[1] Cf., Muhammad ibn al-Qayyim, *al-Waabil al-Sayyib min al-Kalam al-Tayyib* (Beirut: Daar al-Bahaar, 1986), pp. 20-21.

The seriousness of the actions of the tongue may be why this hadith continues with the Prophet (peace be upon him) warning Sufyaan about the dangers of the tongue. Again, the portion of the narration not found in *Sahih Muslim* states,

يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَا أَخْوَفُ مَا تَخَافُ عَلَيَّ فَأَخَذَ بِلِسَانِ نَفْسِهِ ثُمَّ قَالَ هَذَا

[Sufyan then said,] "O Messenger of Allah, what is the thing that you fear most for me?" He [the Prophet (peace be upon him)] took hold of his own tongue and said, "This."

Indeed, in another hadith, from *Musnad Ahmad*, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) is reported to have said,

لا يَسْتَقِيمُ إِيمَانُ عَبْدٍ حَتَّى يَسْتَقِيمَ قَلْبُهُ وَلا يَسْتَقِيمُ قَلْبُهُ حَتَّى يَسْتَقِيمَ لِسَانُهُ

"The faith of a person will not be straight and sound until his heart is made straight and sound. And his heart will not be straight and sound until his tongue is made straight and sound."[1]

The "Challenge" of *Istiqaamah*

Istiqaamah is not an easy thing to achieve. Al-Nawawi noted that ibn Abbas stated that the verse quoted above from *Surah Hood*, "Stand firm and steadfast as you have been ordered," was the hardest and most difficult verse of the Quran on the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him).[2] Furthermore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) began to develop a few gray hairs at a fairly young age. When asked about that, he responded,

شَيَّبَتْنِي هُودٌ وأخواتها

"I have been made gray by [*Surah*] *Hood* and its sister [*Surahs*]."[3]

Concerning *istiqaamah*, Fakhr al-Deen al-Raazi stated,

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[1] Recorded by Ahmad. According to al-Hilaali, it has a *hasan* chain. Al-Hilaali stated that he replied to all of the doubts concerning this hadith in his footnotes to Ahmad ibn Taimiya's *Risaalah fi al-Qalb*. See al-Hilaali, *Edqaadh*, p. 312.

[2] Quoted in al-Nawawi, *Sharh Saheeh*, vol. 1, p. 64.

[3] There is some difference of opinion concerning the authenticity of this hadith. Al-Arnaut and Baajis conclude that it is authentic and said that they have discussed it in detail in another of their works, entitled *Musnad Abi Bakr*. The scholars state that the reason those *surahs* affected the Prophet (peace be upon him) in such a way is that they are filled with stern warnings and discuss, for the most part, the harsh events of the Hereafter, in addition to containing the command for *istiqaamah* in *Surah Hood*. See al-Arnaut and Baajis' footnotes to ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 1, p. 510, fn. 1.

> *Istiqaamah* is a very difficult matter since it encompasses: (a) beliefs, as one must be free of likening Allah to any of His creatures or of denying any of His attributes; (b) deeds, as one must keep from changing or distorting the deeds in any way; and (c) behavior, as one must avoid the path of exaggeration as well as that of lack of action.[1]

Similarly, al-Ghazzaali stated, "Being steadfast along the path in this world is as difficult as being steadfast on the path that is over the Hell-fire. Both of them are finer than a strand of hair and sharper than a sword."[2]

The proper *istiqaamah* will only come about when *imaan* is firmly rooted in the heart. As Siddiqi wrote,

> To keep steadfastness in *Tauhid* is not an ordinary thing. It means that the concept of oneness of God has taken its root firmly in the minds of men and now no interest, however alluring, no pressure, however heavy, can deviate man from the right path. It is a test of man's faith in the Lord and is a clear proof of the fact that it is not under the influence of a whim or wayward emotion that man accepts *Tauhid* as the guiding principle of his life, but he has affirmed it after a careful deliberation and fully realizing the heavy responsibilities that this affirmation entails.[3]

Complete or perfect *istiqaamah*— which implies complete devotion to *tauheed* without any shortcomings— may be impossible to achieve. By the mercy of Allah, such "perfection" is not what is required of human beings. Allah has said in the Quran,

قُلْ إِنَّمَآ أَنَا۠ بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوحَىٰٓ إِلَىَّ أَنَّمَآ إِلَٰهُكُمْ إِلَٰهٌ وَٰحِدٌ فَٱسْتَقِيمُوٓا۟

إِلَيْهِ وَٱسْتَغْفِرُوهُ ۗ وَوَيْلٌ لِّلْمُشْرِكِينَ

"Say: I am but a human being like yourselves. But it has been inspired to me that your God is one God. So take the Straight Path to Him (*fastaqeemoo lahu*) and ask for His forgiveness. And woe to the polytheists" (*Fussilat* 6). Ibn Rajab points out that in this verse is a sign that everyone will be deficient in his *istiqaamah* or his taking of the Straight Path to Allah. This is why, immediately after giving that command, Allah has ordered that His forgiveness be sought.

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[1] Quoted in al-Qaari, vol. 1, p. 85.

[2] Quoted in al-Qaari, vol. 1, p. 85. There is a problem with quoting al-Ghazzaali and others like him who were influenced by Sufi thought. The problem is that what they are describing in their statements, although they use the same term, may be a different concept than what is mentioned in the Quran and sunnah. In this particular case, it seems that al-Ghazzaali was referring to the same or something similar to the concept of *istiqaamah* as discussed in this commentary.

[3] Siddiqi, *Sahih*, vol. 1, p. 29, fn. 89.

His forgiveness is to be sought with respect to one's shortcoming in *istiqaamah.*[1]

A hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) makes this point clearer. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّكُمْ لَنْ تُطِيقُوا أَوْ لَنْ تَفْعَلُوا كُلَّ مَا أُمِرْتُمْ بِهِ وَلَكِنْ سَدِّدُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا

"O people, you are not able to, or you will not do, all that you are ordered to do. But, instead, try to be upright and have glad tidings."[2]

In another hadith in *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) stated,

سَدِّدُوا وَقَارِبُوا

"Be straight on the path or be close to it." In this hadith, in essence, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was saying, "Hit the mark or be close to the mark." What the Prophet (peace be upon him) meant by this statement is that a Muslim must be in one of two situations for every belief, statement and deed: The first state is where the belief, statement or deed is correct and along the Straight Path. This is what is meant by "hitting the mark". It is like a person who has taken aim at something and has actually hit his target. The second state is where the person intends to do what is right and correct but falls a little short. In this state, it must have been the case that the person intended and wanted to hit the target but he simply missed due to his own inability. This is what is meant by, "getting close to the mark". However, at no time would a Muslim intentionally not hit the mark or not aim at the mark. The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentioned these two cases and these two only, and they are the only acceptable cases.[3]

Hence, what is required upon the person is either to be fully following, adhering and sticking to the Straight Path or to be doing his best to adhere to that Straight Path, although he may fall short of that Straight Path.

Since a person is bound to fall short of the Straight Path on occasion, this further implies that a person's deeds can hardly be sufficient to earn him entrance into Paradise. Indeed, it is only by the mercy of Allah that a person will be granted entrance into Paradise. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated in the remainder of the hadith just quoted from *al-Bukhari* and *Muslim*,

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[1] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 1, p. 510.

[2] Recorded by Abu Dawood. According to al-Albaani, it is *hasan*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh Sunan Abi Dawood*, vol. 1, p. 204.

[3] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 1, p. 511.

لَنْ يُدْخِلَ أَحَدًا عَمَلُهُ الْجَنَّةَ قَالُوا وَلا أَنْتَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ لا وَلا أَنَا إِلاَّ أَنْ يَتَغَمَّدَنِي اللَّهُ بِفَضْلٍ وَرَحْمَةٍ فَسَدِّدُوا وَقَارِبُوا

"No one's deeds shall enter him into Paradise." They said, "Not even you, O Messenger of Allah?" He answered, "No, not even me, unless Allah covers me with grace and mercy. Therefore, hit the mark or be close to the mark."[1]

The Requirements of *Istiqaamah*

According to ibn al-Qayyim, proper *istiqaamah* does not come about unless one has met the following six conditions:[2]

(1) Performing the required deeds.

(2) Exerting oneself to perform those deeds.

(3) Restricting oneself to what is lawful while performing those deeds.

(4) Acting on the basis of knowledge.

(5) Singling out Allah alone with respect to one's intention; in other words, one must have purity or *ikhlaas* in one's action.

(6) Performing the deeds in the manner that they have been ordered; in other words, one must perform the deeds in accordance with the sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Ibn al-Qayyim states that if any of these requirements are missing, one is either totally or partially lacking in *istiqaamah.*

What conditions (2) and (3) imply is that a person must make sure that his actions are within the proper bounds. He must neither be too lackadaisical, not performing the proper amount and quality of a deed, not should he go to the opposite extreme of overzealousness or exaggeration.[3]

The person must consider the sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) as the supreme example. He must realize that there is no good in going beyond the sunnah and there is great harm in falling short of the sunnah. This is a very important point. If one is ignorant of this point, he has opened the door for Satan to mislead him.

It is stated that Satan smells the heart of the believer and then tries him. One of the early scholars stated that for every deed, Satan has two forms of evil incitement. Either he will encourage him to be lazy or he will encourage him to go beyond the limits. Satan does not care which approach is effective. This is because if he is successful in either approach, he has gained a victory, as he has misled the person from the sunnah.

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[1] One's deeds are a "cause" for entering Paradise, as is clear in *Al-Nahl* verse 97. In other words, one will be rewarded Paradise because of one's deeds. However, at the same time, one's deeds are not deserving a reward as great and wonderful as that of Paradise. Hence, by one's deeds alone, one would not achieve Paradise if the reward were a comparable exchange. Instead, it is only by Allah's mercy that such a reward has been given for the deeds of this world that are filled with shortcomings and errors. This is all part of the great mercy of Allah, the All-Merciful. Cf., ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 2, p. 534.

[2] Cf., ibn al-Qayyim, *Madaarij*, vol. 2, pp. 107-108.

[3] For more on this point, see Ahmad al-Daryuwaish, *al-Istiqaamah: Arkaanaha wa al-Wasaail al-Mayinah ala Tatbeeqaha* (Riyadh: Dar Balansiyyah, 1417 A.H.), pp. 31-37.

If Satan finds a person very keen on following the sunnah, he will encourage him to go beyond what is considered a proper following of the sunnah. He will do things that the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself actually did not do while, all along, he will think that what he is doing is simply more of something good. He says to himself, "This is a good deed and an act of obedience. Therefore, more of it or a stricter approach to it must be an even better deed and also an act of obedience." By this means, Satan has been able to mislead many. This is what has led to many of the innovations in acts of worship, especially *dhikr* or words of remembrance of Allah. One goes beyond what the Prophet (peace be upon him) established and says some words, for example, one thousand times or until he becomes completely engrossed in those words, thinking that he is becoming one with Allah through such meditation and chanting.

Instead, the person should ask himself, "If the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not go to this extreme and he is the excellent example, isn't this is a sign that this extreme actually is not something good but, instead, must be something harmful?" This is why the early scholars stated that not performing as many deeds but performing what is found in the sunnah is better than over-exerting oneself in deeds that are innovations and not found in the sunnah.

This aspect has been aptly summarized by the Prophet (peace be upon him) when he said to a group of people who felt that the Prophet's practice was not sufficient for them,

إِنَّ لِكُلِّ عَمل شِرَّةً وَلِكُلِّ شِرَّةٍ فَتْرَةً فَإِمَّا إِلَى سُنَّةٍ وَإِمَّا إِلَى بِدْعَةٍ فَمَنْ كَانَتْ فَتْرَتُهُ إِلَى
سُنَّةٍ فَقَدِ اهْتَدَى وَمَنْ كَانَتْ فَتْرَتُهُ إِلَى غَيْرِ ذَلِكَ فَقَدْ هَلَكَ

"Every deed has its period of high emotion and zealousness. And every such feeling has its time of cooling down. That latter time is either toward the sunnah or toward innovation. If the person's time of this nature is toward the sunnah, he is rightly guided. And if his time of this nature is toward other than that, he is destroyed."[1]

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said,

إِيَّاكُمْ وَالْغُلُوَّ فِي الدِّينِ فَإِنَّمَا أَهْلَكَ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمُ الْغُلُوُّ فِي الدِّينِ

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[1] Recorded by ibn Hibbaan and others. According to both al-Arnaoot and al-Albaani, it is *sahih.* See al-Arnaoot's footnotes to al-Faarisi, vol. 1, p. 188; al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 1, p. 431.

"Stay away from exaggeration [and overzealousness] in the religion. Verily, exaggeration in the religion only destroyed those before you."[1]

On the other hand, if Satan finds a person to be lackadaisical, lazy or weak-willed, he will try to lead him to the opposite extreme. He will show him every excuse and permission from the *shareeah*, so the person will not perform many of the deeds that he is supposed to perform. He may abandon the prayers on the basis that not praying is not tantamount to disbelief. A woman may not wear the *hijaab* claiming that it is only recommended or that modesty is what is required and not some specific dress. Indeed, a person may even take interest claiming that it is difficult to avoid and, therefore, the *shareeah* must allow it.

The Means to *Istiqaamah*

There are many forces and pressures upon a person that attempt to drive him away from the path of *istiqaamah*. Satan and his allies will do their utmost to make believers stray from the Straight Path. Therefore, before concluding the discussion of this hadith concerning *istiqaamah*, some of the ways and means that help a person remain along the Straight Path should be mentioned.

Briefly stated, the following, Allah willing, are very beneficial to keep a person along the Straight Path:[2]

(1) Turning to the Quran, reading it attentively and benefiting from its teachings: Reading the Quran strengthens a person's *imaan*, reminds him of Allah and of the Hereafter. It reminds him of his real purpose in life and the fleeting nature of this world. All of these aspects are very important in helping a person stay along the Straight Path. They will make the person realize that there is nothing in this world that is so desirable or necessary that one should risk straying from the Straight Path. Furthermore, reading the Quran will show the person what the Straight Path actually is so that he may avoid swerving by avoiding innovations, heresies and incorrect beliefs or practices.

(2) Continually checking oneself and reviewing one's deeds: Allah has said in the Quran,

يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ ٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَلْتَنظُرْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ لِغَدٍ ۖ وَٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ ۚ
إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ خَبِيرٌۢ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَلَا تَكُونُوا۟ كَٱلَّذِينَ نَسُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ فَأَنسَىٰهُمْ
أَنفُسَهُمْ ۚ أُو۟لَـٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْفَـٰسِقُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

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[1] Recorded by Ahmad, al-Nasaai, ibn Maajah and al-Haakim. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 1, p. 522.

[2] For more details, one may consult Muhammad Saalih al-Munajjid, *Wasaail al-Thibaat ala Deen Allah* (Riyadh: Daar al-Watn, 1411 A.H.), *passim*; Abdullah al-Jarallah, *Al-Istiqaamah* (Makkah: Daar al-Thiqah, 1410 A.H.), pp. 35-42.

"O believers! Fear Allah and keep your duty to Him. And let every person look to what he has sent forth for the morrow, and fear Allah. Verily, Allah is All-Aware of what you do" (*al-Hashr* 18). It has also been reported that Umar ibn al-Khattaab stated, "Reckon yourself before you are reckoned and weigh yourself before you are weighed."

(3) Striving to improve oneself: Everyone should keep in mind that his deeds are not sufficient for the reward of Paradise in the Hereafter. In addition to performing the proper deeds, the person must strive after Allah's mercy and grace. If this idea is firm in a person's mind, he will not be content with the deeds that he is performing. Instead, he will always seek to do even better, especially better in quality and with respect to sincere intention.

(4) Sincerely supplicating to Allah: For example, when the person says, "Guide us to the Straight Path," in every *rakah* of his prayers, he should mean that sincerely. He should think about what he is saying and ask for it with full conviction and hope.

(5) Acquiring sound Islamic knowledge: This is one of the keys to avoiding innovations and straying from the Straight Path. It is only through sound Islamic knowledge that one can first recognize the Straight Path that he is trying to adhere to from all of the other paths.

(6) Studying and following the examples of the earlier prophets: Satan tried his best to make the prophets stray from their mission. Allah has shown their examples in the Quran and how they responded. This should make the heart of the believer firmer in belief and make it easier for him to adhere to the Straight Path. Allah has said,

وَكُلًّا نَّقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنبَآءِ ٱلرُّسُلِ مَا نُثَبِّتُ بِهِۦ فُؤَادَكَ ۚ وَجَآءَكَ فِى هَٰذِهِ
ٱلْحَقُّ وَمَوْعِظَةٌ وَذِكْرَىٰ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

"And all that we relate to you of the news of the messengers is in order that We may make strong and firm your heart thereby. And in this has come to you the Truth, as well as an admonition and a reminder for the believers" (*Hood* 120).

(7) Sticking to the Islamic Community and associating with pious people: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

فَعَلَيْكُمْ بِالْجَمَاعَةِ فَإِنَّمَا يَأْكُلُ الذِّئْبُ الْقَاصِيَةَ

"You must stick to the congregation for the wolf eats the sheep that is off by itself."[1]

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[1] Recorded by Ahmad, al-Nasaai and Abu Dawood. According to al-Albaani, it is *hasan*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 994. In *Sunan al-Nasaai*, one of the narrators, al-Saaib, stated that "the congregation" here means the congregation in prayer. However, there are other hadith of a general nature that make it clear that the point established in this hadith is not simply

(8) Thinking about the Hereafter with its pleasures and punishment and remembering death often: When one thinks about the Hereafter and remembers death, one puts this world in its prosper perspective. Again, the result of this should be that the person will realize that there is nothing here of importance in comparison to remaining steadfast and adhering to the Straight Path.

One should also be aware of the environment he is surrounded by and how its different components affect his ability to stay along the Straight Path. There are many different atmospheres that encourage a person and help him stay along the straight path. However, many times one is surrounded by— even bombarded by— influences that call him to stray from the Straight Path. Sometimes the person himself does not realize what all of these influences are and then he cannot understand why he is finding it so difficult to abide by the *shareeah* in his life. In his work on *istiqaamah*, al-Daryuwaish highlighted the importance of the following different environmental influences in one's life: (1) one's house and family, (2) one's school, (3) the mosque, (4) the society as a whole and, finally, (5) the surrounding media in all its forms.[1] One's workplace should also be added to those environments al-Daryuwaish mentioned. Every Muslim should think about these influences in his particular life. He should try to find the positive influences and frequent them most often. He should identify the negative influences and do his best to remain away from them. In this way, he will be helping himself, by the will of Allah, fulfill this important condition of *istiqaamah*.

Other Points Related to This Hadith

- Those who follow innovations and heresies have failed in the obligation of *istiqaamah*. *Istiqaamah* implies being upright along the Straight Path. Those who follow innovations have chosen to swerve from that path to other ways. They may, thereby, be robbing themselves of the rewards and benefits of *istiqaamah*.
- Al-Ghazzaali stated that the importance and need for *istiqaamah* is so great that Allah has ordered His servants to recite *Surah al-Fatiha* in every *rakah* of their prayers. That *Surah* contains a supplication which is, in essence, a prayer for *istiqaamah* or continual guidance to the straight path.[2]
- Since a person, in general, does not achieve full *istiqaamah* and since no one's deeds are sufficient to enter one into Paradise, no one should be so full of himself and think himself to be something great. Instead, he should be humble toward Allah, recognize his shortcomings and ask Allah to forgive him.[3]

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in reference to congregational prayer but remaining attached to the Islamic community as a whole. Allah knows best.

[1] See al-Daryuwaish, pp. 61-96.

[2] Quoted in al-Qaari, vol. 1, p. 85.

[3] Al-Qaari, vol. 1, p. 85.

- One can see from this hadith and many others that the Companions were very fond of attaining beneficial knowledge. Ibn Uthaimin states that if one studies their example one will find that they did not ignore any matter that they needed for their religion or worldly life except that they would seek such information.[1] They also were not ones to go into long, theoretical discussions. They sought teachings that were clear and comprehensive that they could apply and live by in their lives.[2]

Summary of the Hadith

- All of Islam is encompassed in two aspects: (1) the correct belief in Allah, and (2) remaining firm and steadfast in that correct belief until death.

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[1] Ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 2, p. 535.
[2] Al-Baitaar, p. 134.

Hadith #22: "Tell Me If I were to Perform…"

عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللهِ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللهِ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا أَنَّ رَجُلاً سَأَلَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ أَرَأَيْتَ إِذَا صَلَّيْتُ الْمَكْتُوبَاتِ وَصُمْتُ رَمَضَانَ وَأَحْلَلْتُ الْحَلَالَ وَحَرَّمْتُ الْحَرَامَ وَلَمْ أَزِدْ عَلَى ذَلِكَ شَيْئًا أَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ قَالَ نَعَمْ

رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ

وَ مَعْنَى "حَرَّمْتُ الْحَرَامَ" اجْتَنَبْتُهُ. ومَعْنَى "أَحْلَلْتُ الْحَلَالَ" فَعَلْتُهُ مُعْتَقِدًا حِلَّه

On the authority of Abu Abdullah Jaabir ibn Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with both of them) who said: A man asked the Messenger of Allah (blessings of Allah and peace be upon him), "Tell me if I were to perform the obligatory [prayers], fast Ramadhaan, treat the lawful as permissible and treat the forbidden as prohibited, and I do not add anything to that, would I enter Paradise?" He [the Prophet (peace be upon him)] answered, "Yes."
(Recorded by Muslim.)
The meaning of "treat the forbidden as prohibited," is to stay away from it. And the meaning of "treat the lawful as permissible" is to perform them believing that they are permissible.[1]

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[1] This is one of the few comments that al-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) added after quoting a hadith. Some of the Arabic publications and other translations do not make mention of this passage but it does form part of the body of al-Nawawi's *Forty Hadith*. Perhaps the reason al-Nawawi felt compelled to comment on this hadith is that the literal meaning of what the person said is not acceptable. What he literally said is, "I permit the permissible…" Obviously, this right belongs to Allah and Allah alone. Hence, al-Nawawi felt it necessary to comment directly on that point. Allah knows best. Cf., Abdul Majeed al-Sharnoobi al-Azhari, *Al-Arbaeen Hadeethan al-Nawawiyah* (Beirut: al-Maktabah al-Thiqaafiyah, n.d.), p. 47.

Selected Vocabulary

أرأيت - "do you think that, what do you think, what is your opinion of," many commentators pointed out that here the implication is, "tell me."
إذا - "if"
صليت - "I prayed"
المكتوبات - "the prescribed, obligatory," al-Nawawi records only, "Pray the obligatory," while in *Sahih Muslim*, one narration explicitly mentions "obligatory prayers".
صمت - "I fasted"
أحللت - lit., "I make permissible"
لم - negation in past tense, such as, "did not"
أزد - "increase, add"
نعم - "yes"
معنى - "the meaning of"

Takhreej

This hadith was recorded by Muslim with the chain of Abu al-Zubair on the authority of Jaabir.[1] In that narration, the questioner says at the end, "By Allah, I will not add anything to it."

It was also recorded by Muslim, Ahmad, al-Baihaqi and others from al-Amash on the authority of Abu Sufyaan from Jaabir. In that narration, it explicitly mentions that the person who posed the question to the Prophet (peace be upon him) was al-Numaan ibn Qauqal (may Allah be pleased with him).[2]

Muslim also recorded one more rendition of the chain which has al-Amash narrating it from both Abu Saalih and Abu Sufyaan.[3]

General Comments About This Hadith

One very important aspect of this hadith is that the Prophet (peace be upon him) is answering a question about whether some deeds will lead a person to Paradise. This, in itself, gives this hadith great weight. Furthermore, the question encompasses virtually all of Islam since the questioner stated the proper attitude toward the permissible and the forbidden.

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[1] This is one of the chains for which Imam Muslim has been criticized. In general, those criticisms have been answered. In any case, the criticisms are not valid with respect to this hadith since Imam Muslim also recorded corroborating chains for the hadith.

[2] One may get the impression from the question that it looks like it is coming from a person who seeks to know the minimum he has to perform to enter Paradise and he is not willing to do more than that. It should be noted, however, that the questioner, al-Numaan, participated in the Battle of Badr (whose attendance was not obligatory) and he died as a martyr in the Battle of Uhud. (Al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 148.)

[3] Cf., ibn Muhammad, p. 152.

About the Narrator: Jaabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansaari

Jaabir ibn Abdullah was Jaabir ibn Abdullah ibn Amr al-Ansaari al-Khazraji al-Salami, from the Madinan tribe of Khazraj. He was one of the Ansaar of Madinah who welcomed the Emigrants from Makkah. Jaabir's father was also a Companion. His father witnessed the Oath of Allegiance to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and died as a martyr during the Battle of Uhud. Jaabir's mother was also a Companion of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Jaabir himself witnessed the Second Oath of Allegiance of Uqbah with his father, although he was quite young at the time. His father did not allow him to participate in the Battles of Badr or Uhud, presumably due to his youth. Actually, it seems that he was present at the Battle of Badr but he did not take part in the fighting. After the Battle of Uhud, he fought in all of the battles of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

He lived for sometime in Greater Syria and Egypt. However, he later returned to Madinah and lived there until his death.

He was one of the Companions who lived for quite some time after the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Hence, he became a very important source of information concerning the Prophet (peace be upon him) for the later generation of Followers.

Late in his life, he lost his eyesight. He died in Madinah around the year 94 A.H., although some reports state the year as 73 A.H. Some say that he was the last of the Companions to die in Madinah.

Some 1540 hadith have been recorded on his authority. Fifty-eight such hadith may be found in both *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim.* Al-Bukhari has an additional 28 hadith from Jaabir while Muslim recorded an additional 126 hadith.

"Tell me if I were to perform the obligatory [prayers], fast Ramadhaan..."

The questioner explicitly mentioned the prayers and the fast. This is a sign of the emphasis that the believers gave these two acts. According to some, that is why he did not mention any other obligatory deeds but specifically mentioned these two acts.[1] However, these question of why only those two were mentioned deserves more inspection.

Why Weren't the Pilgrimage and Zakat Also Mentioned?

In this hadith, the questioner only mentioned the prayers and fasting the month of Ramadhaan. He did not mention the pilgrimage and zakat. This could have been for one of two reasons. First, these two acts may not have been obligatory at the time that the person asked this question to the Prophet (peace be upon him). Second, it could have been the case that these two acts were not relevant to the questioner.[1] In other words, these two both require wealth and the questioner may not have been a person of wealth and, hence, these were not obligatory upon him.

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[1] Al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 153.

The correct interpretation may be a combination of those two. It is established that the questioner died as a martyr in the Battle of Uhud. By that time, the obligation to perform the pilgrimage had not yet been revealed. Thus, there was an obvious reason why he did not ask about the pilgrimage. On the other hand, it is possible that the obligation of zakat or some form of it had already been established.[2] If he were not a person of wealth, again, that obligation would not have been relevant to him and that is why he did not mention it in his question. Allah knows best.

"treat the lawful as permissible and treat the forbidden as prohibited"

In the text of the *Forty Hadith*, al-Nawawi included his own comment as to the meaning of this passage, as reproduced above. He stated, "The meaning of 'treat the forbidden as prohibited,' is to stay away from it. And the meaning of 'treat the lawful as permissible' is to perform them believing that they are permissible." The latter portion of this statement implies that a person does the permissible deeds only. In this sense, the "permissible deeds" are inclusive of what is obligatory, recommended and permitted. Hence, one performs these deeds and does not go beyond them to what is forbidden.

Ibn Rajab points out that some of the other commentators state that the meaning of this phrase is to treat the lawful as permissible by simply believing that it is permissible and to treat the forbidden as prohibited by believing it is forbidden and staying away from it.[3]

The difference between this and the previous interpretation is that here there is no mention of performing the lawful since oft-times the lawful is simply permitted or recommended, and it is not essential that a person actually perform them. Thus, it is sufficient that one believes in their permissibility with no need to perform them.[4] At the same time, though, one must actually perform the obligatory deeds as is clearly proven in many other hadith and Quranic verses.[5]

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[1] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 182.

[2] For more information on the history of the legislation of zakat, see Sulaimaan al-Husain, *Al-Maal fi al-Quran al-Kareem* (Riyadh: Daar al-Miraaj al-Dauliyah, 1995), pp. 292-304.

[3] Cf., ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 1, p. 513.

[4] Cf., ibn al-Salaah, *Siyaanah*, p. 144.

[5] Such is actually included in the statement of this hadith. "Treating the prohibited as forbidden" implies performing the obligatory deeds. This is because it is forbidden not to perform the obligatory deeds. If a person is truly remaining away from what is forbidden, then he must, by necessity, be performing the obligatory deeds, for not performing them is part of what is forbidden.

The difference between the two interpretations is not of great significance. However, the latter interpretation is more exacting and proper since it is definitely not necessary that one perform all the permissible deeds. One must, however, believe in their permissibility. Indeed, it is a great sin to "forbid" something that Allah has made permissible. Allah says in the Quran,

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ لَا تُحَرِّمُوا۟ طَيِّبَٰتِ مَآ أَحَلَّ ٱللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوٓا۟ ۚ
إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ ٱلْمُعْتَدِينَ

"O believers! Make not unlawful the good and pure things which Allah has made lawful to you, and transgress not. Verily, Allah does not like the transgressors" (*al-Maaidah* 87). Both forbidding what Allah has allowed and allowing what Allah has forbidden are great sins and go against the steps that lead one to Paradise, as implied in this hadith.

Treating as permissible what Allah allows and treating as prohibited what Allah has forbidden is considered the correct way of "reading the Quran". Allah says in the Quran,

ٱلَّذِينَ ءَاتَيْنَٰهُمُ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ يَتْلُونَهُۥ حَقَّ تِلَاوَتِهِۦٓ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِۦ ۗ وَمَن
يَكْفُرْ بِهِۦ فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْخَٰسِرُونَ

"Those to whom We have given the Book 'recite it as it should be recited'. They are the ones that believe in it. As for those who disbelieve in it, they are the losers" (*al-Baqara* 121). The phrase, "recite it as it should be recited," has been interpreted by ibn Masood, ibn Abbaas and others to mean that they permit what it permits, forbid what it forbids and do not distort its meanings from their proper implications.[1]

A Muslim must believe in the permissibility of whatever Allah has allowed. He must also believe in the prohibition of whatever Allah has forbidden. These are essential aspects of the religion of Islam. If a person knowingly does not meet these conditions, he falls outside of the fold of Islam. If Allah has forbidden an act and the person believes it is permissible or should be considered permissible, he becomes a unbeliever even if he does not perform that act. On the other hand, if a person recognizes that the act is forbidden but he performs it anyway he is a sinner but, in general, he does not fall outside of the fold of Islam because he is not negating a basic principle of the faith.[2]

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[1] Quoted in ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 1, p. 513.

[2] Cf., Sultaan, p. 192.

"And I do not add anything to that"

This portion of the hadith has been interpreted in different ways. Al-Ubayy mentions that the reason the man said, "And I do not add anything to that," was because he was new to Islam and, therefore, he did not have the love and desire to perform additional, voluntary acts. Therefore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) answered him in such a way that he would know that he should perform the obligatory acts. After he becomes accustomed to Islam and loves it, he would then perform the voluntary deeds on his own.[1] However, there does not seem to be any strong evidence for this view.

Al-Ubayy offers a second explanation also. He said that it implies that the man was not going to perform voluntary acts of prayer or fasting. He said the reason was that the man was too busy in performing acts like jihad and other praiseworthy deeds.[2] It is established that the questioner was one who participated in jihad; indeed, he even died as a martyr. Once again, though, there is nothing that lends itself to this interpretation.

The Status of Voluntary and Recommended Deeds

This hadith clearly implies that performing voluntary or recommended deeds is not necessary for entering Paradise. Indeed, by definition, such deeds are not obligatory and, therefore, a person is not sinful if he does not perform them.

A person does not have to perform the voluntary or recommended deeds. As long as he is performing the obligatory deeds and remaining away from the forbidden acts, he is fulfilling the necessary requirements of his religion.

However, if a person truly wishes to get closer to Allah and earn Allah's pleasure, he will not neglect the voluntary and recommended deeds. There is a great reward for their performance but a more important aspect is that they complete the performance and reward of the obligatory deeds. Most people will have some sort of shortcoming in their obligatory deeds. The voluntary deeds will make up for any deficiencies in the obligatory deeds. Hence, in general, it is discouraged for one not to do the voluntary deeds unless the quality of one's obligatory deeds is excellent.

Furthermore, if a person does not perform the *sunnah* acts out of disdain or dislike for the sunnah, then he is no longer one who simply does not perform such deeds. In this case, he will be considered an unbeliever because of his attitude toward the deeds recommended by the *shareeah.*

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[1] Al-Ubayy, vol. 1, p. 85. Ibn Daqeeq al-Eid (*Sharh*, p. 60), al-Haitami, (*Fath*, p. 182), al-Bugha and Mistu (p. 155), Sultaan (p. 194) and Al-Azhari (p. 47) all offer the same explanation. None of them, though, offer any strong proof for that supposition.

[2] Al-Ubayy, vol. 1, p. 85.

In addition, when a person continually avoids the recommended deeds in a general sense, it demonstrates his lack of concern for the religion. He will be losing a great deal of reward and a great opportunity to get even closer to Allah. For this reason, some scholars would not accept the testimony of a person who is known not to perform the *sunnah* or recommended acts. Although they are not doing something considered strictly forbidden, they are demonstrating a lack of religiousness.[1]

Al-Bugha and Mistu further point out that the Companions were very anxious to get as close as possible to Allah and to please Him in every way. In general, they used to perform all of the acts that they witnessed their example, the Prophet (peace be upon him), performing. They did not really distinguish between obligatory and voluntary acts. They would perform them all as part of the overall behavior of the Muslims. It was only among the later generations that the jurists concentrated on distinguishing what was obligatory from what was voluntary.[2] Ibn Daqeeq al-Eid points out that this differentiation was needed because people were not performing all of the acts as the early generations did. Hence, the general people had to know what acts they could not neglect and what acts they could neglect without sin.[3]

Al-Bugha and Mistu state that if a community as a whole agrees upon abandoning a *sunnah* or recommended act, then they should be fought until they perform that act. This is because their behavior shows that they are willing to turn away from the way of the Prophet (peace be upon him).[4]

But, based on this hadith, al-Haitami argues against that opinion. He says that those who claimed that such people must be fought must provide evidence for their opinion. Among the evidence they provide is that the Prophet (peace be upon him) would wait to hear the call to prayer in the morning before he would attack a city. If he heard the call to prayer, he would not attack the city. If he did not hear it, he would attack the city. The argument here is that the call to prayer is a *sunnah* act, they claim, and is not obligatory. Al-Haitami answers this claim by saying that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not refrain from attacking them simply because they performed a *sunnah* act but because that was a clear sign that they were Muslims.[5]

"Would I enter Paradise?" He [the Prophet (peace be upon him)] answered, "Yes."

Ibn Rajab states that this hadith indicates that if a person performs the obligatory deeds and remains away from the forbidden ones, he will enter

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[1] Al-Bugha and Mistu, pp. 156-157. Also see ibn Daqeeq al-Eid, *Sharh*, pp. 59-60; al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 182.

[2] Al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 157.

[3] Ibn Daqeeq al-Eid, *Sharh*, p. 60.

[4] Al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 156. Also see ibn Daqeeq al-Eid, *Sharh*, p. 60.

[5] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 182.

Paradise. He states that there are numerous hadith that indicate this; indeed, they are *mutawaatir*. Here are a couple of the numerous hadith he presents:[1]

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيِ اللَّه عَنْهم أَنَّ أَعْرَابِيًّا أَتَى النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّه عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ دُلَّنِي
عَلَى عَمَلٍ إِذَا عَمِلْتُهُ دَخَلْتُ الْجَنَّةَ قَالَ تَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ لا تُشْرِكُ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَتُقِيمُ الصَّلاةَ
الْمَكْتُوبَةَ وَتُؤَدِّي الزَّكَاةَ الْمَفْرُوضَةَ وَتَصُومُ رَمَضَانَ قَالَ وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لا أَزِيدُ
عَلَى هَذَا فَلَمَّا وَلَّى قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّه عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَنْ سَرَّهُ أَنْ يَنْظُرَ إِلَى رَجُلٍ مِنْ أَهْلِ
الْجَنَّةِ فَلْيَنْظُرْ إِلَى هَذَا

On the authority of Abu Huraira: A bedouin came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said, "Point me to deeds that if I were to perform them, I would enter Paradise." The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Worship Allah and do not associate anything with Him, establish the obligatory prayer, give the zakat and fast Ramadhaan." The man said, "By the One in whose hand is my soul, I will not add anything to this." When he had turned away, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "If it pleases someone to see a person from Paradise, he should look at that man." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

In another hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) explicitly mentioned that only if the person were true to his words of fulfilling these conditions would he then enter Paradise. Al-Bukhari records a similar hadith with another bedouin, who also said he would do what is required and not add anything to it, and the Prophet (peace be upon him) said at the end,

دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ إِنْ صَدَقَ

"He will enter Paradise if he is truthful to his word."

Ibn Rajab points out that although those deeds lead one to enter Paradise, at the same time, one may be performing deeds that are preventive factors and will keep one from entering Paradise. Ibn Rajab then quotes the following hadith:

جَاء رجلٌ إِلَى النَبِي صلى الله عليه وسلم فَقَالَ يَا رَسُوْلَ الله شهدتُ أَنْ لاَ إِلَهَ إلاَّ الله
وأَنَّكَ رَسُوْلُ الله وصَلَّيْتُ الخَمْس وأَدَّيْتُ زكاة مَالِي وَصُمْتُ شَهْرَ رَمَضَانَ. فَقَالَ

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[1] Cf., ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 1, pp. 514-518.

رَسُوْلُ الله صلى الله عليه وسلم مَنْ مَاتَ عَلَى هَذا كَانَ مَعَ النَّبِيِّيْن والصِّدِّقِيْن والشُهَدَاءِ
يَوْمَ القِيَامَة هَكَذا - وَنَصَبَ أصبعيه - مَا لَمْ يَعُقَّ وَالِدَيْه

A man came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said, “O Messenger of Allah, I bore witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah and that you are the Messenger of Allah, I prayed the five [daily] prayers, I paid the zakat on my wealth and I fasted the month of Ramadhaan.” The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, “The one who dies upon those [acts] shall be with the prophets, sincere and martyrs like this on the Day of Resurrection- and he raised his fingers together- as long as he did not disobey his parents.”[1]

Ibn Rajab then points out that all of the hadith of the nature, “Whoever does such and such will enter Paradise,” are to be understood in this nature. In other words, the person who does those acts will enter Paradise as long as he does not also perform some other acts that prevent his entrance into Paradise. All of the necessary conditions must be met for entrance into Paradise and all of the preventive factors must be removed.

He points out that there are many hadith that indicate that particular acts may keep one from entering Paradise. For example, he quoted the following hadith,

لا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ مَنْ كَانَ فِي قَلْبِهِ مِثْقَالُ ذَرَّةٍ مِنْ كِبْرٍ

“The one who has even the slightest amount of arrogance in his heart will not enter Paradise.” (Recorded by Muslim.)[2]

As was discussed in the commentary to Hadith Number 3, even the testimony of faith has certain conditions that must be met. If a person makes the testimony of faith but then follows it up with deeds that reduce its effect, he may not enter Paradise without first being punished in the Hell-fire. The Follower al-Hasan al-Basri once said, “[The statement that] there is none worthy of worship except Allah has conditions to it. Therefore, beware of slandering innocent, believing women.”[3]

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[1] According to ibn Rajab and ibn Katheer, this hadith was recorded by Ahmad. However, it does not seem to be in the published editions of *Musnad Ahmad*. The hadith is also recorded by ibn Khuzaima, ibn Hibbaan and al-Bazzaar with a *sahih* chain. See al-Hilaali, *Eeqaadh*, pp. 318-319.

[2] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 1, pp. 519-521. These types of hadith are also sometimes misunderstood. They do not necessarily mean that the person will never enter Paradise. That would be the case only for those who commit acts that take them out of the fold of Islam. In general, the meaning of those hadith is that those people will not enter Paradise along with those who enter Paradise without any form of punishment in the Hereafter.

[3] Quoted in ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 1, p. 522.

A Weaker Interpretation

This hadith explicitly mentions only praying and fasting. Other hadith of this nature also concentrate on those two acts and may also mention zakat and some other deeds. Al-Dhuhaak, al-Zuhri and others understand that hadith of this nature were statements made by the Prophet (peace be upon him) before the other obligatory acts were revealed from Allah. Hence, they consider this type of hadith to be abrogated or they say that later conditions must be added to what the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated in hadith of this nature.[1]

However, there is no need to resort to such claims. The hadith implies that the person recognizes what is permissible and what is forbidden and abides by them. The other hadith that are similar to this explicitly mention worshipping Allah alone and other essential characteristics that encompass obeying Allah in all matters. Thus, there is nothing missing from these hadith that need them to be abrogated or adjusted by later statements of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

The Desire to Know the Path to Paradise

One can note from numerous hadith that the Companions were very anxious to know the path to Paradise.[2] Numerous Companions came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) to ask him to show them a deed or deeds that will lead them to Paradise. They realized that this was the most important information that they could obtain for their own welfare. After receiving the answer from the Prophet (peace be upon him), many of them swore that they would perform exactly what the Prophet (peace be upon him) had told them. The Prophet (peace be upon him) would then state that they will be in Paradise if they are truthful to those conditions or acts.

This question should always be foremost in the mind of every believer. He should seek the answer to this question in the Quran and sunnah. After reading the clear answers by the Prophet (peace be upon him) to this question, the person should set himself on the path to follow the deeds that will lead one to Paradise. He should concentrate on them and excel in them. In this way, Allah willing, he will be from among the prosperous and blessed on the Day of Judgment.

Is This an Easy Path to Paradise?

The questioner mentioned fasting, praying, permitting the legal and prohibiting the forbidden. Simply based on those acts, the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated that the questioner would enter Paradise. Does this imply that Paradise is very easy to enter?

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[1] Their opinions were quoted by ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 1, p. 523.

[2] For examples, see al-Bugha and Mistu, pp. 149-150.

In reality, these aspects that the Prophet (peace be upon him) mentioned are not easy unless the person has a firm faith. The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentioned some very important matters. They were aspects that the polytheistic Arabs refused to submit to and they are aspects that the secularists and non-religious people of today cannot adhere to. In other words, they are not as simple and light as they may seem at first glance.

Attending to the prayers in the proper manner and on a daily basis is not an easy matter unless one truly believes in them. Abstaining from food and drink during the daytime of Ramadhan is also not easy unless the resolve to please Allah by fasting is present. The willingness to submit to Allah with respect to what He permits and forbids is a very great matter indeed. Those who want and believe in freedom— that is, free to follow their passions and desires— cannot submit to this condition. In fact, they will fight this condition with all of their might.[1]

One can now see that these acts that will lead a person to Paradise are not as simple as they might seem. They require true commitment and belief in Allah. If that true faith is present, they do become easy on the person. However, if that faith or commitment is lacking or completely missing, these deeds become a burden and a hardship. This will be the perception of those lacking in faith. In the end, they will be the losers because they were not willing to adhere to these basic acts and principles.

Other Points Related to This Hadith

- The key to prosperity and entering Paradise is the performance of the obligatory deeds. The voluntary deeds may make up for some shortcomings in the performance of the obligatory deeds and may also raise a person's rank in Paradise, but the essential deeds are the obligatory deeds.[2]
- It is a fundamental aspect of the religion to accept as permissible what Allah has permitted and to treat as forbidden what Allah has forbidden. No one has the right to challenge Allah with respect to this authority. Anyone who knowingly does so falls outside of the fold of Islam. Similarly, anyone who desires a law other than the Law of Allah also falls outside of the fold of Islam.[3]
- If the assumption that the questioner was new to Islam and that is why the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not encourage him to do voluntary deeds is correct, this is a sign that the teacher or scholar should take into consideration the situation of the questioner before replying to any

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[1] Cf., al-Baitaar, p. 138.

[2] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 182.

[3] Al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 158.

question. Here, the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not want to overburden the questioner who first had to adjust to performing the five daily prayers and fasting Ramadhan. The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not mention a long list of non-obligatory deeds that would be good for the person to perform. When dealing with new Muslims today, the same type of approach should be taken. The obligatory deeds should be dealt with first. As the person becomes accustomed to them and begins to love them, he then can be taught the voluntary deeds. At that time, he will be emotionally and mentally ready to perform them and the religion will not be a burden upon him. Allah knows best.

Summary of the Hadith

- The prayers and the fast are two of the essential or most important acts of this religion.
- Doing what is permissible and avoiding what is forbidden is also an essential aspect of the religion.
- If the person truly fulfills the above stated essential aspects of the religion, he will enter Paradise by the grace and mercy of Allah.

Hadith #23:
“Purification is Half of Faith…”

عَنْ أَبِي مَالِكٍ الحَارِثِ بْنِ عَاصِمٍ الأَشْعَرِيِّ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ
قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّه عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ الطُّهُورُ شَطْرُ
الإِيمَانِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ تَمْلأُ الْمِيزَانَ وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ
تَمْلَآنِ أَوْ تَمْلَأُ مَا بَيْنَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَالصَّلاةُ نُورٌ
وَالصَّدَقَةُ بُرْهَانٌ وَالصَّبْرُ ضِيَاءٌ وَالْقُرْآنُ حُجَّةٌ لَكَ أَوْ عَلَيْكَ
كُلُّ النَّاسِ يَغْدُو فَبَايِعٌ نَفْسَهُ فَمُعْتِقُهَا أَوْ مُوبِقُهَا
رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ

On the authority of Abu Maalik al-Haarith ibn Aasim al-Ashari, may Allah be pleased with him, who said: The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, “Purification is half of the faith. The phrase *al-hamdulillah* (‘All praise be to Allah’) fills the scale. The phrases *sub-haanallaah*[1] (‘High is Allah above every imperfection and need; He is pure and perfect’) and *al-hamdulillah* (‘All praise be to Allah’) together fill— or each fill— what is between the heavens and earth. Prayer is a light. Charity is a proof. Patience is a brightness. The Quran is either an argument for or against you. And everyone goes out in the morning and sells himself, either freeing or destroying himself.” (Recorded by Muslim.)

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[1] This phrase is usually translated as, “Glory be to Allah.” “Glory” is defined as “adoring praise or worshipful thanksgiving” (see *Webster’s*, p. 602). It does not, then, properly capture the meaning of *subhaanallaah*. Ibrahim and Johnson-Davies (p. 78) translate it as, “How far is Allah from every imperfection.” Khan has translated it as, “To honor Allah and make Him free from all that (unsuitable evil things) that are ascribed to Him (or Glorified be Allah).” See Muhammad Muhsin Khan, *Summarized Sahih al-Bukhari* (Riyadh: Maktaba Dar al-Salaam, 1994), p. 1059.

Selected Vocabulary

الطهور	- "the act of purification," it can refer to either physical or spiritual purity. When the word is الطَّهور (*al-tahoor* instead of *al-tuhoor*), it refers to the water or matter that is being used as a cleansing agent. The commentators seem to agree that the word here is *al-tuhoor* and not *al-tahoor*.
شطر	- literally this means, "half"; however, it does not necessarily mean half as in two equal halves, but it may mean one of two parts to something; furthermore, it could also be used to mean a part of something, and not just one of two parts.
الحمد لله	- *al-hamdulillah*, "all praises be to Allah"
تملأ	- "fills"
الميزان	- "the scale"
سبحان الله	- *subhaanallaah*, "High is Allah above every imperfection and need; He is pure and perfect"
بين	- "between"
السماوات	- "the heavens"
الأرض	- "the earth"
نور	- "light"
برهان	- "proof"
حجة	- "argument," here, it could be understood to mean "witness"
لك	- "for you"
عليك	- "against you"
يغدو	- "he goes out in the early morning"
بايع	- one who exchanges something for something else; it applies equally well to the buyer and the seller
فمعتقها	- "then sets it free"

Takhreej

This hadith is authentic. It was recorded by Muslim, al-Tirmidhi, Ahmad, al-Daarimi, al-Baihaqi, al-Tabaraani, ibn Mandah, Abu Awaana and a number of others. Some of the narrations have slight differences in their wordings but they are, for the most part, very consistent with one another.

Muslim recorded this hadith with the chain: Ishaaq ibn Mansoor said: Hibbaan ibn Hilaal narrated to us, saying: Abban narrated to us, saying: Yahya said that Zaid narrated to him, saying: Abu Salaam narrated to him from Abu Maalik al-Ashari. This is one of the chains that Muslim has been criticized by al-Daaraqutni and others for using. It is possible that there is a missing narrator in this chain because al-Nasaai records this same hadith with the narrator Abdul Rahmaan ibn Ghanam between Abu Salaam and Abu Maalik. However, it is very possible and not an uncommon type of occurrence that Abu Salaam may have heard this hadith from both Abu Maalik and Abdul Rahmaan. Hence, there is no problem with the chain in *Sahih Muslim*. Furthermore, even if such was a mistake, the hadith is still definitely *sahih* due to the known chain in *al-Nasaai*.[1]

There are some differences in the way that this hadith is recorded in different books. For example, the narration in *Sunan al-Nasaai* and *Sunan ibn Maajah* states, "Completing the ablution is half of the faith... The *tasbeeh* (statement, 'How far is Allah from every imperfection') and the *takbeer* (statement, 'Allah is greatest') filled the heavens and earth[2]... Zakat is a proof..." A narration recorded by al-Tirmidhi states, "Ablution is one half of the faith." Another narration recorded by al-Tirmidhi and Ahmad states, "The *tasbeeh* is half of the scale and *al-hamdulillah* fills it. The *takbeer* fills what is between the heavens and earth. Fasting is half of patience. And purity is half of faith."[3]

The text that will be followed and commented upon here is the authentic text from *Sahih Muslim* that al-Nawawi has reproduced as stated above.

General Comments About This Hadith

This hadith touches upon some of the most important deeds. It refers to purity, remembrance of Allah, prayer, charity, patience, abiding by the Quran and the ultimate journey of mankind.

About the Narrator: Al-Haarith ibn Aasim al-Ashari

This is a Companion concerning whose name there is quite a difference of opinion. In fact, there are ten different opinions as to his exact and complete name. He was from the Ashari tribe in Yemen and was one of their delegation that came to the Prophet (peace be upon him).

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[1] Cf., al-Nawawi, *Sharh Saheeh*, vol. 3, pp. 98-99. There is also a difference of opinion over whether Yahya ibn Abu Katheer ever received hadith directly from Zaid ibn Aslam. Yahya ibn Maeen said that he did not while Ahmad said that he did. This particular chain makes it clear that Yahya did receive this hadith directly from Zaid. Cf., ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 5. However, although the hadith is definitely *sahih*, some scholars, including al-Daraqutni, ibn Hajr and Muqbil al-Waadiee, claim that the chain in *Sahih Muslim* is broken. [See Muqbil al-Waadiee's footnotes to Ali al-Daaraqutni, *al-Ilzaamaat wa al-Tatabba* (Makkah: Daar al-Baaz, 1985), pp. 159-160.] It should be noted that it would not be strange for Imam Muslim to intentionally record that chain which some thought was a broken chain in order to express his view that the chain is, in fact, unbroken or in order to affirm that Yahya did hear hadith from Zaid. The most important point for Imam Muslim was that the hadith itself was *sahih*. After establishing that fact, he may include a specific chain for a specific secondary purpose.

[2] In this narration, the past tense is used, "filled". This is considered a way of stressing that such will really occur when those words are said.

[3] Cf., ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 6.

He lived in Greater Syria. He died there during the plague outbreak in the year 18 A.H. According to al-Haitami, Muaadh, Abu Ubaidah, Sharahbeel and al-Haarith all died on the same day during that plague outbreak.[1]

Twenty-seven hadith have been recorded on his authority. His hadith have been recorded by Muslim, Abu Dawood, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nasaai and ibn Maajah. Jaabir ibn Abdullah and others narrated hadith on his authority.

"Purification is half of the faith."

There is a great deal of difference of opinion as to what the Prophet (peace be upon him) exactly meant by this statement. Below are some of the explanations that have been offered by the scholars:

(1) Its meaning is that the reward for purification is up to half of the reward for faith. In other words, the reward for cleanliness and purity is so great that it could reach to half the reward of faith. This points out the importance of purity and cleanliness in Islam. This interpretation is one of many mentioned by al-Nawawi.[2] Most of the other commentators either did not mention it or did not accept it. Sultan, for example states, "This goes against the apparent meaning of the text and there is no evidence for it."[3] However, al-Sabbaagh favors this interpretation while al-Baitaar calls it acceptable.[4]

(2) Faith wipes away all of the previous sins that were committed. Similarly, ablution wipes away the previous minor sins. But ablution is not sound without faith. Therefore, the effectiveness of ablution is dependent on faith in the same way that half of something is dependent on the other half. This interpretation also seems far-fetched according to Sultaan.[5]

(3) The meaning of *imaan* or faith in this phrase is the prayer. For example, Allah says in the Quran,

وَمَا كَانَ ٱللَّهُ لِيُضِيعَ إِيمَٰنَكُمْۚ

"Allah would never allow your *imaan* to be lost" (*al-Baqara* 143). This is in reference to the prayers that were performed in the direction of Jerusalem before the command to face Makkah. The explanation of the word *imaan* in this verse is "prayers". Since purification is a condition for the soundness of prayer, it is like it is half of the prayer. (In this case, the word *shatr* does not mean exactly half but it means one of two parts.) This is the opinion that al-Nawawi favors.

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[1] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 183.

[2] Al-Nawawi, *Sharh Saheeh*, vol. 3, p. 99. The first four opinions stated above were all mentioned by al-Nawawi, Ibid., vol. 3, pp. 99-100.

[3] Sultaan, p. 196. Al-Qaari, vol. 1, p. 318 also explicitly refutes it.

[4] Muhammad Al-Sabbaagh, *Min Hadyi al-Nubuwwah Tammulaat fi Adad min Jawaami al-Kalim* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islaami, 1994), p. 13; al-Baitaar, p. 142. Since he made this conclusion, al-Sabbaagh discusses the place of cleanliness in Islam for a few pages. He says that both physical and spiritual cleanliness are of great importance in Islam, as can be proven through numerous hadith. He then concludes that this belief in and understanding of cleanliness is something that is missing from the Muslim world today and needs to be revived. See al-Sabbaagh, pp. 13-15.

[5] Sultaan, p. 197.

Commenting on this interpretation, Sultaan wrote,

> This particularizes and restricts the meaning of “faith”. There is no strong evidence for this, especially since some of the Quranic commentators interpret “faith” in the above verse to mean constancy and steadfastness to the faith when the direction of the *qibla* was changed. But some scholars say that the stronger view is to interpret faith to mean prayer in that verse due to an authentic sunnah regarding that. So this is a possible interpretation.[1]

(4) Another interpretation is that faith is made up of affirmation by the heart and outward submission in deeds. These are the two parts to faith. Purity, or *tahaara*, implies the prayer which is the greatest outward form of submission. That is why it has been referred to as half of faith.

(5) Ibn Uthaimeen argues that faith is comprised of having some characteristics and being free of other characteristics. A person, for example, should be free of associating partners with Allah and sinful living. He argues that this is the purification that is referred to in this hadith. A Muslim purifies himself, thusly, from all physical or spiritual filth. This comprises one-half of faith, as stated by the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) in this hadith.[2]

(6) Some interpret “purification” in this phrase to mean avoiding sins. This usage for “purification” may be noted in the Quran. For example, the people of Lot said about him and his family,

إِنَّهُمْ أُنَاسٌ يَتَطَهَّرُونَ

“These are indeed people who want to be pure [from sins]” (*al-Araaf* 82).[3]

Faith is made up of two aspects: performing the proper deeds and remaining away from the improper deeds. “Purification” is the remaining away from the improper deeds. Therefore, it makes up half of faith as stated by the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Ibn Rajab mentions this interpretation and says that it would be plausible if it were not for the other narratives that state, “Ablution is half of faith,” and “Completing the ablution is half of the faith.” Ibn Rajab points out another problem with this interpretation. He says that many deeds, like the prayer, are also acts of purification as they wipe away sins. Hence, they must be included under purification. But then purification could no longer be considered half of faith in the sense they described. Therefore, ibn Rajab rejects this interpretation.[1]

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[1] Sultaan, p. 197.

[2] Ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 1, p. 134. This is the only interpretation that ibn Uthaimin offers for this hadith. Siddiqi, vol. 1, p. 147 seems to favor this interpretation although he also mentions the view that faith in this hadith means prayer.

[3] Also see *al-Mudathir* 4 and *al-Baqara* 222.

(7) Ibn Rajab states that the correct view concerning the meaning of "purification" in this hadith is that it refers to the ritual purification by water as found, for example, in ablution. He says that this is the majority opinion and this is why Muslim, ibn Majah and others included this hadith in the chapters related to ablution.[2] Furthermore, this is consistent with the other narrations that state, "Ablution (*wudhu*) is one-half of faith," and "Completing the ablution is one-half of faith."

Although this may look conclusive, it may not necessarily be so. Al-Haitami points out that if the linguistic meaning of *wudhu* is understood, then it means the same as *al-tuhoor* or purification.[3] Second, the narration, "Completing the ablution" contradicts what the others have narrated and may not be considered the strongest wording of the hadith.

Given this meaning for the word, that "purification" means ablution, ibn Rajab continues by saying that there is a difference of opinion as to how this purification is to be considered half of faith. He presents the following opinions:[4]

(a) One explanation is that the meaning of the word *shatr* in this hadith is not half but simply "part of". Hence, purification is a part of faith. This is al-Haitami's conclusion, and he says that it removes all of the problems in interpreting this hadith.[5] Ibn Rajab rejects this interpretation on two counts. First, it goes against the well-known usage of the word *shatr* and, second, it contradicts the narration that states, "Purification is one-half (*nisf*[6]) of faith." Ibn Rajab's arguments can be answered by saying that, first, although it is not the most common usage, it is a usage for the word. Second, the narration with the word *nisf* could easily be an example where the narrator was simply narrating the meaning and not the exact wording of the text. The narrator could have replaced the word *shatr* with *nisf* as he felt that they had the same meaning. Otherwise, the well established reports of this hadith state *shatr* and not *nisf*.

(b) The second interpretation ibn Rajab presents is the same as (1) above. Ibn Rajab categorically rejects this possibility.

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[1] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 7.

[2] Al-Nasaai included it in the chapter on the obligation of zakah, as zakat is specifically mentioned in the narration he records. Al-Qaari states that where people place this hadith is simply based on their own understanding of the hadith and is, therefore, not of great significance. See al-Qaari, vol. 1, p. 319.

[3] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 184.

[4] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, pp. 7-14.

[5] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 184.

[6] The word, *nisf*, is exactly and literally one-half of something else.

(c) The third interpretation is that faith wipes away all of the major sins while ablution wipes away the minor sins. In this sense, it is "half" of faith. Ibn Rajab also refutes this interpretation.

(d) The fourth view is that the meaning of "faith" here is the prayer, as discussed under (5) above. Prayer is not accepted except with purity and that is why it is considered half of it. Ibn Rajab further points out that prayer is the key to Paradise but ablution is the key to prayer. Hence, they are both needed to open to doors to Paradise. Ibn Rajab offers more evidence in favor of this interpretation. This is the opinion that ibn Rajab seems to favor since he does not offer anything to refute this view. But at the end of his discussion of all the views, he stated, "Allah knows what He meant by that and what the Messenger meant by that."

(e) A fifth view is that all of the acts of faith purify the heart. Purification by water purifies and cleans the body. Therefore, the acts of faith can be divided into two categories: acts that purify the external aspects and acts that purify the internal aspects. In that sense, purification is half of faith. Sultan concludes that this is a plausible interpretation.[1]

(8) Al-Ghazzaali states that purification here refers to purification of the heart from envy, hatred, spitefulness and other diseases of the heart. Complete faith requires that the heart be free of these diseases. When a person makes the testimony of faith, he has completed half of the faith. When he cleanses his heart of these diseases, he has completed the other half.[2]

Given the above, the following are the possible translations and meanings of this part of the hadith:

(A) "The reward for purification and cleanliness is up to half the reward for faith."

(B) "Ablution is half of the faith, due to the sins that it wipes away."

(C) "Purification is similar to half of the prayer."

(D) "Purification is half of the faith because it encompasses the outward forms of submission."

(E) "Purification from associating partners with Allah and sinful living is half of the faith."

(F) "Purification in the sense of avoiding sins is half of the faith."

(G) "Performing ablution is an act of faith."

(H) "Ablution is half of the faith becomes it removes the external impurities."

(I) "Purification of the heart from its spiritual diseases is one half of faith."

It seems that (A) and (B) are definitively out of the question. The others all seem possible. Many of the others are consistent with each other and it is possible that more than one of them are meant. Purification may mean the general sense of purification or it may mean the specific act of ablution and so forth. It is very difficult to determine which interpretation has the most weight to it. Allah knows best.

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[1] Sultaan, p. 197.

[2] Quoted in al-Nawawi, *Sharh Matn*, pp. 99-100.

If it is concluded that *al-tuhoor* means ablution (*wudhu*), then this hadith discusses the following aspects: ablution, remembrance of Allah, prayer, zakah (as explicitly mentioned in one narration), fasting (as explicitly mentioned in one narration), followed by a general reference to applying the Quran.

"The phrase *al-hamdulillah* ('All praise be to Allah') fills the scale."

Al-Haitami states that this reward comes to the person who states this expression while thinking about its meaning and submitting to its implications.[1] Hence, a mere verbal statement without one's heart or mind being involved is not what is requested from the individual. (This point is also true for the saying of *subhaanallaah* that shall be discussed below.)

There is a difference of opinion concerning the meaning of "fills the scale". Some state that this is a metaphorical statement: If *al-hamdulillah* had a physical mass to it, it would fill the scale. The second interpretation, which is much closer to the literal meaning, is that Allah will give deeds mass and form on the Day of Judgment. This can be proven through many hadith. This hadith is stating that the physical manifestation that Allah will give the statement *al-hamdulillah* will be so great that it will fill the scale.[2]

The Meaning and Importance of *al-Hamdulillah*[3]

Al-Hamdulillah is a heartfelt expression of both praise and gratitude toward Allah.[4] It truly comes about when a person realizes the numerous bounties Allah has bestowed upon him. This includes even the bounty of knowing Allah and recognizing that He should be thanked. It also comes about when one thinks about Allah and His attributes of perfection.

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[1] Al-Haitami, p. 185.

[2] Al-Sindi states that statements like *al-hamdulillah* may become "bodies of light" that do not "crowd each other" in the same way that a person could have one thousand lamps in a room and the light of each lamp is there without it forcing the other lights not to exist. See Abu al-Hasan al-Hanafi al-Sindi, *Sharh Sunan ibn Maajah al-Qazweeni* (Beirut: Daar al-Jeel, n.d.), vol. 1, pp. 120-121.

[3] The reference in this hadith is to the phrase, "*al-hamdulillah*" and not to *Surah al-Faatiha*, which is sometimes referred to as *al-hamd*. Many commentators made this comment in their discussion of this hadith, inferring that some people had the wrong understanding of this hadith.

[4] There is a hadith that states, "The best supplication is *al-hamdulillah*." This hadith is recorded by al-Tirmidhi, ibn Majah and others. Although some scholars state that it is *hasan*, it seems that its chain is weak. See Abu Ishaaq al-Huwaini's footnotes to Ismaaeel ibn Katheer, *Tafseer al-Quran al-Adheem* (al-Dammam, Saudi Arabia: Daar ibn al-Jauzi, 1997), vol. 1, p. 460.

In his commentary on the Quran, Maudoodi has explained the phrase *al-hamdulillah*, which forms part of the second verse of *Surah al-Faatiha*, in the following manner,

> Whenever we praise someone, we do so for two reasons. First, because excellence calls for praise, irrespective of whether that excellence has any direct relevance to us or not. Second, we praise one whom we consider to be our benefactor; when this is the case our praise arises from a deep feeling of gratitude. God is worthy of praise on both counts. It is incumbent on us to praise Him not only in recognition of His infinite excellence but also because of our feeling of gratitude to Him, arising from our awareness of the blessings He has lavished upon us.
>
> It is important to note that what is said here [meaning the phrase *al-hamdulillah*] is not merely that praise be to God, but that *all* praise be to God *alone*. Wherever there be any beauty, any excellence, any perfection— in whatever thing or in whatever shape it may manifest itself— its ultimate source is none other than God Himself. No human beings, angels, demigods, heavenly bodies— in short, no created beings— are possessed of an innate excellence; where excellence exists, it is a gift from God. Thus, if there is anyone at all whom we ought to adore and worship, to whom we ought to feel indebted and grateful, toward whom we should remain humble and obedient, it is the *creator* of excellence, rather than its *possessor*.[1]

Although commonly used interchangeably, there is a difference between *al-hamd* (praise and gratitude الحمد), *al-madh* (praise المدح) and *al-shukr* (thankfulness الشكر). A person can be praised (*al-madh*) for things that he does voluntarily as well as for things that are beyond his control. A person may be praised for his physical appearance, for example, which he has little control over, or for his spending in charity, which is a voluntary act on his part. In fact, *madh* is even done toward non-living things, such as praising the quality of a pearl. *Al-hamd* would only be used in the latter case of the person's own voluntary act and not in the former case. Hence, in this sense, *al-hamd* is something more specific than *al-madh*. Furthermore, with respect to Allah, *al-hamd* is much more befitting as He is being praised for His qualities that He has set for Himself.[2]

On the other hand, *al-hamd* is more general than *al-shukr*. *Al-shukr* is only in response to something that has come from somebody else. For example, if a person does another person a favor, he would thank him for that favor. One would not give “thanks” to a person because of that person's characteristics. If another person is generous, for example, one would not say, "I thank him because he has the characteristic of generosity," although one would thank him for an act of generosity. However, *al-hamd* is expressed for both specific acts as well as the qualities of a person.[1] Furthermore, *al-hamd* is used for an act done toward the person himself as well as acts done toward others. In other words, one does not give *shukr* for what Allah has bestowed upon others but one does express *hamd* in such a case.[2]

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[1] Abul Ala Maudoodi, *Towards Understanding the Quran* (Leicester, United Kingdom: The Islamic Foundation, 1988), vol. 1, pp. 35-36.

[2] See al-Raazi, vol. 1, pp. 218-219.

Therefore, one states *al-hamd* ("praise and gratitude") for Allah due to His acts that He has determined for Himself and are not forced upon Him, due to the bounties that He has bestowed upon a person, due to His perfect and sublime attributes and qualities, due to His being free from any imperfections and blemishes, and due to one's need and reliance upon Him.

According to ibn al-Qayyim, *al-shukr* is more general than *al-hamd* in the sense that *shukr* or thankfulness is exhibited by one's heartfelt feelings, by the tongue in one's statement of thanks and by one's deeds in acting out one's feelings of thankfulness. *Al-hamd*, however, is exhibited only by one's heart and tongue.[3] However, according to al-Raazi, *hamd* is also expressed by one's actions.[4] Allah knows best.

Belief in the Scale

In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) made reference to the Balance or Scale. The belief in the existence of the Balance forms part of the Muslim's belief. Ibn Abu al-Izz has discussed the belief in the Balance in some detail. He wrote[5],

> As for the Balance (*al-Mizan*), we believe in the Balance. Allah has referred to it in various verses of the Quran. For instance, "We shall set up scales (*mawazin*) of justice for the Day of Judgment, so that not a soul will be dealt with unjustly in the least. And if there be (no more than) the weight of a mustard seed, We will bring it (to account). And enough are We to take account" (*al-Anbiyaa* 47). And, "Then those whose balance (of good deeds) is heavy they will attain salvation, but those whose balance is light will be those who have lost their soul, in Hell will they abide" (*al-Muminoon* 102-103).

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[1] Cf., al-Isfahaani (Daar al-Fikr), pp. 130.

[2] Al-Raazi, vol. 1, p. 219. Al-Raazi also has a discussion of why the expression *al-hamdulillah* is superior to any other way of expressing praise and gratitude to Allah. See al-Raazi, vol. 1, pp. 219-220.

[3] Cf., ibn al-Qayyim, *Madaarij*, vol. 2, p. 257.

[4] Al-Raazi, vol. 1, p. 228.

[5] The belief in the Balance is not discussed in much detail in the available English literature. For that reason, it is discussed in some detail here.

Al-Qurtubi has said that scholars think that when the reckoning will finish, deeds will be put in the Balance. Since weighing is meant for determining reward or punishment, it will take place after the reckoning. Reckoning shall be for determining works, and weighing shall be for determining the value of works so that the reward or penalty may be fixed. The word *mawazin* in verse 47 of *surah al-Anbiyaa* quoted above is plural, it means that there will be a number of balances there. It may also mean that there will be different kinds of balances for weighing different kinds of work. True knowledge, however, is with Allah.

There are many hadith on the subject that make it quite clear that the Balance will have two scales visible to the eyes. Imam Ahmad has recorded a hadith transmitted by Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Hubuli from ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Amr that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, “Allah will pick out a person from my *Ummah* from all the creation, ask him to proceed forward, place before him ninety nine registers recording his deeds, each register as long as his eyes could see, and ask him, ‘Do you deny any item mentioned in these registers? Have my scribes wronged you in any way?’ He will say, ‘No, my Lord!’ Allah will then ask, ‘Have you any excuse to offer or any good deed to mention which is not here?’ He will say, ‘I have nothing to say, my Lord!’ Allah will say, ‘No, you have a good thing to mention. There will be no injustice to you this day.’ A card will then be produced which will have, ‘I witness that there is no god except Allah, and that Muhammad is his servant and messenger.’ It will be handed to him, but he will wonder and say, ‘What can this do in the presence of so many evil records?’ Allah will say, ‘You will not be wronged.’ Then all the registers will be placed on one scale and that card will be placed on the other scale and it will outweigh them. Nothing can outweigh the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate.”[1] This is recorded by al-Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah and Ibn Abi al-Dunya from al-Layth. In al-Tirmidhi’s version the last words are, “Nothing can outweigh the name of Allah.”[2]...

Al-Bukhari has recorded a hadith from Abu Hurayrah in support of this hadith. The Prophet (peace be on him) said, “On the Day of Judgment, a very big and heavy man will be brought but in Allah‘s sight his weight will be less than the wing of a mosquito. If you like you may recall the verse, ‘We shall not give them any weight on the Day of Judgment’ (*al-Kahf* 105).”[1] Imam Ahmad has recorded a hadith wherein it states that one day Ibn Masud was trying to pluck a small branch of an Arak tree in order to brush his teeth. His shanks, which were very thin, were exposed by the wind, and some people burst into laughter at them. The Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) asked, “Why are you laughing?” They said, “O Prophet of Allah, we are laughing at how thin Ibn Masud’s shanks are.” He retorted, “By Allah, they will be heavier than Mount Uhud in the Balance.”[2]

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[1] Recorded by Al-Tirmidhi, ibn Maajah, Ahmad, ibn Hibbaan and al-Haakim. The last sentence of this hadith is incorrect. The correct wording is the second wording stated in the text above, “Nothing can outweigh the name of Allah.” See al-Arnaoot’s footnotes to ibn Abu al-Izz, vol. 2, p. 610.

[2] These words occur in the hadith of al-Tirmidhi and al-Haakim.

Actions themselves will be weighed in the Balance. Muslim has recorded a hadith reported by Abu Malik al-Ashari that the Prophet (peace be on him) said, “Cleanliness is half of faith, and the words, *al-hamdu li-Allah* (all praise is for Allah) will fill the Balance.”[3] The last hadith in al-Bukhari’s *Sahih* is, “Two sentences are light on the tongue, but they are very dear to Allah and heavy on the scales: *Subhan Allah wa bi hamd-i-hi* (glory to Allah and praise to Him) and *Subhan Allah al-Azim* (Glory be to Allah, the Majestic).”[4]...

In view of these hadith, the objection of an obstinate denier, who says that actions are accidents not bodies and therefore they cannot be objects to be weighed, has no significance. Allah can change the accidents into bodies and put them on the scale, as was shown earlier. This is also suggested in a hadith which Imam Ahmad has recorded from Abu Hurayrah: The Prophet (peace be on him) said, “Death will be brought in the form of a ram covered with dust and placed between Paradise and Hell. A call will be given to the people of Paradise, who will raise their heads and look. A call will also be given to the people of hell, who will raise their heads and look. They will think that perhaps the time of relief has arrived. The ram will be killed and the announcement will be made, ‘Life is forever; there will be no more death.’”[5] Al-Bukhari has also recorded this hadith with some difference in wording. All this proves that the deeds, doers and the records of deeds will all be weighed, and that the Balance will have two scales. Further details of how these things only Allah knows.

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[1] Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

[2] Recorded by Ahmad, and al-Tabaraani. According to al-Arnaoot, its chain is *hasan*. Ibn Abi Shaibah and al-Haakim have something similar. See al-Arnaoot’s footnotes to ibn Abu al-Izz, vol. 2, p. 611.

[3] Recorded by Muslim, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nasaai, Ibn Maajah and Ahmad.

[4] Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

[5] Recorded by Ahmad, al-Daarimi and al-Nasaai in *al-Kubra*. According to al-Arnaoot, its chain is *sahih*. See al-Arnaoot’s footnotes to ibn Abu al-Izz, vol. 2, p. 613.

Our duty is to believe in what the Prophet (peace be on him) has said about the Unseen without adding or deducting anything. Woe to those who deny the setting of the balances on the Day of Judgment of which the Prophet has spoken. They fail to see the reason behind it and therefore deny it. They say that balances are required for weighing groceries. I am afraid that these people will be given no weight on the Day of Judgment. Balances will be set up in order to demonstrate Allah's justice to all the people, although no one more readily accepts excuses than Allah. This is also the reason why He sends messengers to give good tidings and to issue warnings to the people. There may be other reasons, too, that we do not know. You may see the point if you reflect upon what transpired between the angels and Allah when He told them, "I shall create on the earth a vicegerent. They (the angels) said, 'Will you place therein who will make mischief therein and shed blood, whilst we do celebrate Your prayers and glorify Your holy name?' Allah said, 'I know what you know not'" (2:30). At another place He has said: "Of knowledge it is only a little that is communicated to you" (*al-Isra* 85).

In the earlier discussion [in Abu al-Izz's book] on the Fountain (*al-Hawd*), we have quoted al-Qurtubi saying that the Fountain will come before the Balance and the Balance will come before the Bridge. In the two *Sahih*s, it states, "When the Believers cross the *Sirat* they will be detained at an arched bridge (*qantarah*) between Paradise and Hell. Every wrongdoer will pay for the wrong he has done. When they are purged of all ills and cleansed, they will be allowed into Paradise."[1] As al-Qurtubi has said, this *qantarah* will be the second bridge which the Believers will have to cross. However, no one will fall from this bridge. Allah knows best.[2]

"The phrases *subhaanallaah* ('High is Allah above every imperfection and need; He is pure and perfect') and *al-hamdulillah* ('All praise be to Allah') together fill— or each fill— what is between the heavens and earth."

The narrator of the hadith could not recall if each of these statement fills what is between heaven and Earth or if the two of them together fill what is between heaven and Earth. In either case, it definitely points to the importance of these two phrases. Nowadays, people have some understanding of the great distance between earth and the lowest heaven. There are stars that are billions of miles away from the Earth. However, these two important phrases fill the space between the Earth and heaven.

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[1] Recorded by al-Bukhari. It was not recorded by Muslim.

[2] Ibn Abu al-Izz, vol. 2, pp. 608-614. Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 185, also has a beneficial discussion of the concept of the Balance.

The Meaning and Importance of *Subhaanallaah*

When one states the phrase *subhaanallaah* it means that he is denying that Allah could have any blemish, shortcoming, imperfection or defect whatsoever. He is complete and perfect and not in need of anything or anyone. This also denies that He could have or be in need of a spouse, son and so forth.

Allah is free, for example, of any imperfection or blemish with respect to His names. Allah has said,

وَلِلَّهِ ٱلْأَسْمَآءُ ٱلْحُسْنَىٰ

"And to Allah belong the most beautiful and excellent names" (*al-Araaf* 180). Allah is also free of any imperfection or blemish with respect to His attributes and qualities. This is the meaning or implication of the words *al-mathal al-'ala* in the following verse,

لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِٱلْـَٔاخِرَةِ مَثَلُ ٱلسَّوْءِ ۖ وَلِلَّهِ ٱلْمَثَلُ ٱلْأَعْلَىٰ ۚ وَهُوَ ٱلْعَزِيزُ ٱلْحَكِيمُ

"For those who disbelieve in the Hereafter there is an evil description. And for Allah is the highest and loftiest description (*al-mathal al-'ala*). And He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise" (*al-Nahl* 60).

Allah's acts are also free from any blemish or shortcoming. His creation, for example, is according to His wisdom and excellence. That which He has commanded and ordered is also free of any blemish or shortcoming. Allah has said,

أَفَحُكْمَ ٱلْجَٰهِلِيَّةِ يَبْغُونَ ۚ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ ٱللَّهِ حُكْمًا لِّقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ

"Do they then seek the judgment of the Days of Ignorance? And who is better in judgment than Allah for a people who have firm faith" (*al-Maaidah* 50).

The phrase *subhaanallaah* implies all of the above aspects.[1]

The Prophet (peace be upon him) described the merits and importance of this concept when he said,

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[1] Cf., ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 1, p. 135.

كَلِمَتَانِ خَفِيفَتَانِ عَلَى اللِّسَانِ ثَقِيلَتَانِ فِي الْمِيزَانِ حَبِيبَتَانِ إِلَى الرَّحْمَنِ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ

"There are two statements that are light on the tongue but heavy in the scale and beloved to the Most Merciful [Allah]: *Subhaanallaahi-l-Adheem* ('High is Allah above any imperfection or want, the Great, from every imperfection') and *Subhaanallaahi wa bihamdihi* ('Far above is Allah from every imperfection and I glorify His praises')." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

Ibn Rajab astutely points out the difference between *al-hamdulillah* and *subhaanallaah* and why, in general, *subhaanallaah* is stated in conjunction with other statements, as in the hadith just mentioned. Ibn Rajab stated,

> [In another narration, it states,] "*Subhaanallaah* is half of the Scale while *al-hamdulillah* fills it." The reason for that is that *al-hamdulillah* confirms all praises for Allah. It makes reference to all of the Perfect Attributes and Majestic Qualities. However, *subhaanallaah* simply negates from Allah any shortcoming, blemish or deficiency. Confirmation is more important than negation. In fact, for this reason *subhaanallaah* is not stated by itself. It is joined with something that indicates confirmation of completeness and perfection. Sometimes it is accompanied with praises, as in, "*Subhaanallaah* and to Him is the Praise," or "*Subhaanallaah* and *al-Hamdulillah*" [as in this hadith]. Sometimes it is accompanied with [one of Allah's] names that indicate His greatness and grandeur, such as in the statement, "*Subhaanallaah*, [Allah] the Great (*al-Adheem*)." If this hadith of Abu Malik means that together *subhaanallaah* and *Allahu Akbar*[1] fill what is between the heaven and earth, the matter is clear. If the meaning is that each of them fills what is between the heaven and earth, the scale is more spacious than what is between the heaven and earth. Therefore, what fills the Scale fills something more than what is between heaven and earth.[2]

The Importance of *Dhikr*

This hadith demonstrates the importance and great reward for *dhikr* or remembrance of Allah. Ibn al-Qayyim calls *dhikr* the food for the hearts, the weapon by which one fights, the cure for the diseases and the connection between the servant and his Lord.[1]

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[1] As mentioned in a different narration.

[2] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, pp. 17-18. Ibn Rajab then goes into a discussion as to which is superior, *al-hamdulillah* or *la ilaha illa-llah* ("There is none worthy of worship except Allah"). He concludes that *al-hamdulillah* encompasses all of the aspects of perfection and completeness for Allah. Hence, it encompasses and includes *tauheed* itself. Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 20.

The following hadith clearly indicates the superiority of *dhikr*. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

أَلاَ أُخْبِرُكُمْ بِخَيْرِ أَعْمَالِكُمْ وَأَرْفَعِهَا فِي دَرَجَاتِكُمْ وَأَزْكَاهَا عِنْدَ مَلِيكِكُمْ وَخَيْرٍ لَكُمْ مِنْ
إِعْطَاءِ الذَّهَبِ وَالْوَرِقِ وَخَيْرٍ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْ تَلْقَوْا عَدُوَّكُمْ فَتَضْرِبُوا أَعْنَاقَهُمْ وَيَضْرِبُوا
أَعْنَاقَكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَى قَالَ ذِكْرُ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى

"Shall I inform you of the best of your deeds, the one that raises you most in rank, most purifying to your Lord, which is better for you than giving gold and silver and better for you than meeting your enemy and striking their necks and them striking your necks?" They said, "Certainly, [tell us]." He said, "It is the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted."[2]

In the Quran, Allah has ordered people to make *dhikr* (*al-Ahzaab* 41[3]); prohibited its opposite, namely neglectfulness and forgetfulness (*al-Hashr* 19); tied success into constantly remembering Allah (*al-Anfaal* 45); praised the people of *dhikr* (*al-Ahzaab* 35); stated that the losers are those who turn away from *dhikr* to useless pursuits (*al-Munaafiqoon* 9); stated that He mentions those who mention Him (*al-Baqara* 152); mentioned that it is greater than everything (*al-Ankaboot* 45); and has stated that it must accompany every act, and that *dhikr* is like the "spirit" or soul of each act (*Taha* 14).[4]

In his book on the benefits of *dhikr*, Wahbi has mentioned eighty-three different beneficial aspects to *dhikr*.[5] Among the most important of them are the following:

Dhikr increases one's love for Allah. Love for Allah is the spirit and heart of this religion, as ibn al-Qayyim mentioned. One's happiness in this life and the Hereafter revolves around it.[1] The more one remembers Allah and thinks about His attributes as well as all of the blessings He has bestowed on mankind, the more one will love Allah.

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[1] Ibn al-Qayyim, *Madaarij*, vol. 2, p. 423.

[2] Recorded by Ahmad, al-Tirmidhi, ibn Maajah and Malik. According to al-Albaani, its chain is *sahih*. (See al-Albaani's footnotes to al-Tabreezi, vol. 2, p. 702.) Some people find it difficult to understand how *dhikr* could be superior to charity and jihad. Some state that *dhikr* benefits the individual alone while these other deeds benefit the individual as well as others, so they should be considered superior. Some scholars have responded to this by saying that the superior *dhikr* is not simply a remembrance with the tongue. Instead, it is a remembrance of the tongue and the heart. This remembrance drives the person to perform obligatory deeds, such as zakat and jihad, and keeps him away from evil deeds. Hence, *dhikr* encompasses all of those other deeds and that is why it considered superior to the other deeds as it is their foundation. See Muhammad al-Shaukaani, *Tuhfah al-Dhaakireen* (Beirut: Daar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1988), p. 14.

[3] The verses referred to in this passage are simply examples that the reader may wish to follow up. Obviously, there is more than one verse in which, for instance, Allah has ordered His remembrance.

[4] Abdul Haadi Wahbi, *Fawaaid Dhikr Allah* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islaami, 1992), pp. 7-11.

[5] Wahbi, pp. 12-94. Al-Sabbaagh, pp. 16-26, also mentions some important benefits to *dhikr*.

Dhikr may also lead one to the exalted level of *ihsaan*, which was discussed under Hadith Number 2. *Ihsaan* is where one realizes that Allah is watching him at all times or where one feels he sees Allah in front of him. If a person is not thinking about Allah and remembering Allah, he will not attain this level. It can only be attained when a person is mindful of Allah and remembers Him. This is the essence of *dhikr*.

Al-Sabbaagh points out that if a person remembers Allah while performing an obligatory deed, he will make sure to perform it in the best way. If he remembers Allah when he is about to perform a sin, this remembrance may keep him from committing that sin. In this way, *dhikr* protects him from all evils. This is why al-Hasan al-Basri once said that there are two types of *dhikr*. One is where a person remembers Allah between himself and Allah and, therefore, it is known only to Allah. This is a great deed and will have a great reward. He says that the *dhikr* that is even better than that is the remembrance of Allah in the presence of what Allah has forbidden. This will keep the person away from the forbidden act and will protect him.[2]

Therefore, every Muslim should try to increase his remembrance of Allah. No matter what deed he is about to do, he should always try to keep Allah in his mind. It is when he forgets about Allah that he will be apt to commit sins. Indeed, it is when he forgets Allah that his heart begins to die and he becomes like the dead, although he is physically living. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

مَثَلُ الَّذِي يَذْكُرُ رَبَّهُ وَالَّذِي لا يَذْكُرُ رَبَّهُ مَثَلُ الْحَيِّ وَالْمَيِّتِ

"The similitude of one who remembers his Lord and one who does not is like that of the living and the dead." (Recorded by al-Bukhari.)

"Prayer[3] is a light."

First it should be noted that there are three ways of understanding an expression of this nature in Arabic. The first way is to understand it as an embellished way of expressing the likeness between the two things. As in the translation here, "Prayer is a light," while, in fact, prayer is not really a light but the likeness between them is so great that one can call it a light. The second understanding is that prayer is full of light. The third understanding is that prayer gives light. All of these are possible and all may be meant here by this expression.[1]

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[1] Ibn al-Qayyim, *al-Waabil*, p. 84.

[2] Al-Sabbaagh, p. 22.

[3] Al-Haitami points out that prayer here implies prayer performed in its proper manner with all of its conditions and requirements. Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 186.

The scholars have interpreted, “Prayer is a light,” in more than one fashion. Some scholars say that the meaning of “light” here is not a physical light but a spiritual light. In other words, prayer, in a sense, guides the person and keeps him along the Straight Path. Its effects are such that it keeps the person away from sins and evil deeds because it builds up one’s relation with Allah. In this way, it can be called a “guiding light”. This interpretation is supported by the Quranic verse,

إِنَّ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ تَنْهَىٰ عَنِ ٱلْفَحْشَآءِ وَٱلْمُنكَرِ ۗ

“Verily, the prayer prevents one from great sins and wicked deeds” (*al-Ankaboot* 45).

A second interpretation is that light here is meant in a physical sense. On the Day of Resurrection, the prayers will be transformed into a true physical light for the one who performed them. Allah says in the Quran,

يَوْمَ تَرَى ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَٱلْمُؤْمِنَٰتِ يَسْعَىٰ نُورُهُم بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَبِأَيْمَٰنِهِم

“On the Day you shall see the believing men and the believing women: their light running forward before them and by their right hands” (*al-Hadeed* 12).

A third interpretation is that light, once again, means a physical light but in this life and not in the Hereafter. In other words, the faces or physical being of those who pray will have a presence of light about them. This is based on the Quranic verse,

سِيمَاهُمْ فِى وُجُوهِهِم مِّنْ أَثَرِ ٱلسُّجُودِ ۚ

“Their mark [of faith] is on their faces from the traces of prostration (during their prayers)” (*al-Fath* 29).

The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated that the prayer is “light”. He did not confine it to any particular type of light but he left it general. Hence, it is possible that all three of the above meanings may have been meant by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in this statement. They are all plausible and acceptable.[2]

This hadith, therefore, is one portion of much evidence demonstrating the importance of the prayer. It will guide the person to and along the Straight Path. It will help him to know where that path is and will help him stay on it. In addition, it may be a light for him on the Day of Judgment that will guide him to the Path to Paradise. Indeed, it will be a light for him in this life also.

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[1] Cf., al-Mudaabaghi, p. 186.

[2] Ibn Uthaimin also states that prayers will be a light for the person in his grave. His evidence for that is not convincing. See ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 1, pp. 136-137.

The Difference between *Noor* نور (Light), *Burhaan* برهان (Rays) and *Dhiyaa`* ضياء (Illumination)

In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) used a different word to describe prayer, charity and patience. There is, though, a close relationship between the three words used. They all are related to light or giving light. Light itself has a very important connotation in the Quran. It is closely related to the concepts of being guided, guidance and following guidance.[1]

The Prophet (peace be upon him) used the word نور (*noor*) for the prayer and ضياء (*dhiyaa`*) for patience. *Dhiyaa`* has a stronger implication than *noor*. Allah has used the word *dhiyaa`* to describe the sun and *noor* to describe the moon in the following verse,

هُوَ ٱلَّذِى جَعَلَ ٱلشَّمْسَ ضِيَآءً وَٱلْقَمَرَ نُورًا

"It is He who made the sun a splendor of brightness and the moon a light" (*Yoonus* 5). *Noor* itself is a light. A light guides and, in general, is not harmful or damaging in any way. *Noor* is light without any burning to it. On the other hand, *dhiyaa`* is the thing itself that is shining and bright and giving off extreme heat. It is the thing that is the source of light and that can be harmful, for example, when touched.[2]

Noor is therefore more befitting for prayer than *dhiyaa`*. Siddiqi wrote, "The light of the moon is very soothing and comfortable, so is the case with prayer. It provides great comfort to the soul by bringing it into the presence of the Merciful Lord."[3]

On the other hand, patience, which has been described as *dhiyaa`*, usually involves a great deal of effort and work. Hence, it involves some kind of "heat" or "burning" with it. It still guides the person and may lead to his rescue from his situation. But that guidance comes only with the price of effort and work. Hence, it has been described differently from the prayers, although both of them are a sure "light" or guidance.

For charity, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) used the word برهان (*burhaan*). *Burhaan* are the rays that are emitted by the sun. The rays point to the existence of the sun, the source of light. This is perhaps why the Prophet (peace be upon him) used that term for charity because, as shall be discussed below, charity points to the existence of one's faith in a manner similar to how the rays point to the existence of the sun. It is not a guiding light in the sense of prayer and patience. But it is a light that points to the existence of something else.[1]

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[1] Al-Sabbaagh states that the word *noor* ("light") has been used with a spiritual meaning in thirty-five places in the Quran while it has been used in reference to its physical meaning in only about eight places. Al-Sabbaagh, p. 34.

[2] Ibn Rajab states that this is why the guidance of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) is usually described as *dhiya`* while the guidance of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is usually described as *noor*. The Law of Moses was known for being "difficult" or "burdensome", due to the Jews own responses to Allah's revelation. However, the Law of Muhammad (peace be upon him) came and removed all of those burdens from earlier times, as Allah states in *al-Araaf*, verse 157. See ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 25.

[3] Siddiqi, vol. 1, p. 148.

"Charity is a proof."

"Charity" or *sadaqa* is the giving of one's wealth to others for the sake of Allah. It includes giving to the poor and needy as well as giving to build mosques and so forth.[2]

As was just noted, the Prophet (peace be upon him) described charity, *sadaqa*, as a *burhaan. Burhaan*, again, are the rays that are emitted by the sun. Part of their significance is that they clearly and unequivocally point to the existence of their source, the sun. That is why a "proof" or "definitive argument" is called a *burhaan*. It unequivocally points to the truth of what it is being used to prove.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) has befittingly called charity a *burhaan* or demonstrative proof. This has been explained in more than one way. These explanations are not contradictory and they all could have been meant by the Prophet (peace be upon him) when he made this statement.

One explanation is that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was alluding to the fact that *sadaqa* is a sign of one's true belief.[3] By its nature, wealth is something beloved to a human being.[4]

Allah says in the Quran,

وَتُحِبُّونَ ٱلْمَالَ حُبًّا جَمًّا

"And you love wealth with much love" (*al-Fajr* 20). The only way a person would give up part of his wealth is if he believed in something and loved something greater than that wealth. Hence, his overcoming of his desires and his willingness to part with something so beloved to his soul is a sign that he has true belief and love for Allah. Therefore, his willingness to sacrifice his wealth is a proof of his faith.[1]

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[1] Numerous commentators noted the difference between *noor* and *dhiya* and why each was used for prayer and patience, respectively, but none of them noted the significance of using the word *burhaan* for charity as opposed to *noor* and *dhiya.*

[2] Ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 1, p. 137.

[3] Al-Nawawi points out that charity is called *sadaqa* because it points to the truthfulness (*sidq*) of one's faith. (*Sadaqa* and *sidq* are both derived from the same root.) See al-Nawawi, *Sharh Matn*, p. 100.

[4] In different verses of the Quran, Allah praises the one who "gives of his wealth even though he has love for it." (See, for example, *al-Baqara* 177.) Some understand these words to mean, "gives of his wealth out of love for Him [Allah]." In other words, there is a difference of opinion concerning the referent of the final masculine pronoun. The basic rule is that the pronoun refers to the closest possible referent unless there is evidence to show otherwise. In this case, it would refer to the wealth itself and not to Allah. See Husain al-Harbi, *Qawaaid al-Tarjeeh ind al-Mufassireen: Diraasat Nadhariyyah Tatbeeqiyyah* (Riyadh: Daar al-Qaasim, 1996), vol. 2, pp. 621-629.

Giving up part of one's wealth for the sake of Allah is a much greater sign of one's faith than mere lip service. Al-Qaari points out that, in general, hypocrites are not willing to give in charity (unless to be seen) for they are not willing to part with their wealth.[2] Al-Sabbaagh further noted,

> The correct measure— in most cases— for the faith of a person is his offering, spending and sacrificing... This is because it is very simple for a human to display his satisfaction with sound ideas and thought and to claim that he is a believer in them. But the true proof for his claim of faith is his offering, spending and sacrificing in the path of his beliefs and for what his beliefs require of him.[3]

A second explanation is that a person's *sadaqa* will be a proof for him on the Day of Judgment when he is asked about his wealth and how he used it in this life. He will rush to his charity and seek refuge in it in the same way that one rushes to a proof for support and help.[4] This is in relation to the hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him),

لا تَزُولُ قَدَمَا عَبْدٍ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ حَتَّى يُسْأَلَ عَنْ عُمُرِهِ فِيمَا أَفْنَاهُ وَعَنْ عِلْمِهِ فِيمَ فَعَلَ وَعَنْ
مَالِهِ مِنْ أَيْنَ اكْتَسَبَهُ وَفِيمَ أَنْفَقَهُ وَعَنْ جِسْمِهِ فِيمَ أَبْلاه

"A person's foot will not move away on the Day of Resurrection until he is asked about his life and how he spent it, about his knowledge and how he acted upon it, about his wealth and how he earned and spent it, and about his body and how he used it."[5] At that moment when he is asked about how he spent his wealth, his *sadaqa* will appear as a demonstrative evidence for him that he had used it in the proper fashion.

The Importance of *Sadaqa*

This hadith is one of the many Quranic verses and hadith that demonstrate the importance of *sadaqa*. First, it is a proof of one's faith. In the Quran, there are numerous verses that relate true faith and spending together. For example, Allah has said,

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[1] Ibn Rajab states that this is why some of the bedouins revolted after the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him). They were no longer willing to pay the zakat. This was a sign that they were lacking in their faith. Cf., ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 24.

[2] Al-Qaari, vol. 1, p. 320.

[3] Al-Sabbaagh, p. 38.

[4] Cf., al-Nawawi, *Sharh Saheeh*, vol. 3, p. 100.

[5] Recorded by al-Tirmidhi. According to al-Albaani, it is *hasan*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 2, pp. 1220-1221.

ذَٰلِكَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبُ لَا رَيۡبَۛ فِيهِۛ هُدٗى لِّلۡمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٢﴾ ٱلَّذِينَ يُؤۡمِنُونَ بِٱلۡغَيۡبِ
وَيُقِيمُونَ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقۡنَٰهُمۡ يُنفِقُونَ

"This is the Book, whereof there is no doubt, a guidance for those who fear Allah: those who believe in the Unseen, establish the prayers and spend out of that which We have provided them" (*al-Baqara* 2-3). Elsewhere Allah says,

إِنَّمَا ٱلۡمُؤۡمِنُونَ ٱلَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ ٱللَّهُ وَجِلَتۡ قُلُوبُهُمۡ وَإِذَا تُلِيَتۡ عَلَيۡهِمۡ
ءَايَٰتُهُۥ زَادَتۡهُمۡ إِيمَٰنٗا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمۡ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ﴿٢﴾ ٱلَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ
وَمِمَّا رَزَقۡنَٰهُمۡ يُنفِقُونَ ﴿٣﴾ أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلۡمُؤۡمِنُونَ حَقّٗاۚ لَّهُمۡ دَرَجَٰتٌ عِندَ
رَبِّهِمۡ وَمَغۡفِرَةٞ وَرِزۡقٞ كَرِيمٞ

"The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, feel a fear in their hearts, and when His verses are recited to them, they increase their faith; and they put their trust in their Lord (alone); who perform the prayers and spend out of that which We have provided them. It is they who are truly the believers. For them are grades of dignity with their Lord, and forgiveness and a generous provision" (*al-Anfaal* 2-4).[1]

Numerous hadith demonstrate the importance and virtuousness of spending in the way of Allah or *sadaqa.* The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

مَنْ تَصَدَّقَ بِعَدْلِ تَمْرَةٍ مِنْ كَسْبٍ طَيِّبٍ وَلاَ يَقْبَلُ اللَّهُ إِلاَّ الطَّيِّبَ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَتَقَبَّلُهَا بِيَمِينِهِ
ثُمَّ يُرَبِّيهَا لِصَاحِبِهِ كَمَا يُرَبِّي أَحَدُكُمْ فَلُوَّهُ حَتَّى تَكُونَ مِثْلَ الْجَبَلِ

"If someone gives in charity the equivalent of a date from his lawful and good earnings— and Allah only accepts what is lawful and good— Allah will take it in His right hand and raise it for its giver, in the same way that one of you raises his small colt, until it becomes similar to a mountain [in size]." (Recorded by al-Bukhari.)

This hadith demonstrates how pleased Allah is with a person's *sadaqa.*[2] It also demonstrates that the amount that is given does not have to be large. A person may not have much that he can give in charity. However, that does not matter. He should still be willing to give in charity for there will be a great reward for him, Allah willing. Indeed, the little that he is able to give in charity may be enough to protect him from the Hell-fire. The Prophet (peace be upon him) advised his Companions and all Muslims by saying,

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[1] Other verses which emphasize the relationship between being a believer and "spending", which includes *sadaqa*, are *al-Hajj* 34-35, *al-Qasas* 53-54 and *al-Sajdah* 15-16.

[2] *Al-Baqara* 261 is a verse that also demonstrates the great reward for giving charity.

اتَّقُوا النَّارَ وَلَوْ بِشِقِّ تَمْرَةٍ

“Protect yourselves from the Fire, even if by just half a date [given in charity].” (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

In fact, depending upon a person’s situation and his desire to please Allah by giving charity, a small amount of charity may be rewarded in a greater fashion than a large amount of charity. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated,

سَبَقَ دِرْهَمٌ مِائَةَ أَلْفٍ قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَكَيْفَ قَالَ رَجُلٌ لَهُ دِرْهَمَانِ فَأَخَذَ أَحَدَهُمَا
فَتَصَدَّقَ بِهِ وَرَجُلٌ لَهُ مَالٌ كَثِيرٌ فَأَخَذَ مِنْ عُرْضِ مَالِهِ مِائَةَ أَلْفٍ فَتَصَدَّقَ بِهَا

“One *dirham*[1] surpassed one hundred thousand [*dirham*s].” The people said, “O Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), how is that?” He answered, “[This is the case of] one man had two *dirham*s and he took one of them and he gave it in charity and another man had a great deal of wealth and went to part of his wealth and gave away one hundred thousand [*dirham*s].”[2]

A very important point to realize is that when one spends for the sake of Allah, Allah will replace that money for the person. A person’s wealth will not be depleted by giving in charity. To believe in this fact and actually put it into practice requires true faith— and *sadaqa* is a proof of one’s faith, as stated above. Those who are weak in faith will only see their money leaving them and will not have the faith that Allah will somehow restore it to them. However, Allah says,

قُلْ إِنَّ رَبِّى يَبْسُطُ ٱلرِّزْقَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِۦ وَيَقْدِرُ لَهُۥۚ وَمَآ أَنفَقْتُم
مِّن شَىْءٍ فَهُوَ يُخْلِفُهُۥۖ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ ٱلرَّٰزِقِينَ

“Say: Truly, my Lord enlarges the provision for whom He wills of His slaves, and [also] restricts it for him. And whatsoever you spend of anything [for Allah’s cause], He will replace it. And He is the Best of Providers” (*Saba*\` 39). The Prophet (peace be upon him) also emphasized this point. He stated that Allah has said,

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[1] *Dirham* is a type of currency.

[2] Recorded by al-Nasaai, ibn Hibbaan and al-Haakim. According to al-Albaani, it is *hasan*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 1, p. 675.

أَنْفِقْ أُنْفِقْ عَلَيْكَ

"Spend, and you shall be spent upon." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.) In another hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated,

مَا نَقَصَتْ صَدَقَةٌ مِنْ مَالٍ

"Charity does not in any way decrease wealth." (Recorded by Muslim.)

"Patience is a brightness."

There are two interpretations as to the meaning of the word patience in this phrase. According to some, it is a reference to the fast; in other words, "Fasting is a brightness." The word "fast" has been explicitly stated in one of the other narrations of this hadith.[1]

A second interpretation is to understand "patience" in its literal and general *shareeah* sense.[2] This interpretation is the one that will be followed in the commentary here.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) described patience as a *dhiyaa`*. As described above, this implies that it is a type of light but it is not as soothing or easy on a person as *noor*. This is because patience is not always an easy thing for a person. By definition, it involves restraining oneself and controlling one's actions. It can even be as if one is actually in a burning fire. Things around may be seemingly out of control. However, if he has patience, that will lead him or guide him out of his difficulties in the same way that *dhiyaa`* or brightness gives light and guidance to a person.

Patience, therefore, is like a bright shining splendor that can aid a person through his most difficult hour. Indeed, it may be the only thing that gives him hope of there being light at the end of the tunnel. This light and guidance, of course, comes from Allah as He is the One who is with those who are patient and He is the One whose remembrance is in their heart bringing them comfort. As Allah says,

وَٱصْبِرُوٓا۟ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ مَعَ ٱلصَّـٰبِرِينَ

"Have patience. Verily, Allah is with those who are patient" (*al-Anfaal* 46).

Al-Nawawi stated that as long as the person has praiseworthy patience, he will have light and guidance that will keep him along the Straight

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[1] Fasting involves many of the same aspects as patience. Indeed, a hadith describes the month of Ramadhaan as the month of patience. According to al-Qari, if the hadith is understood to mean the fast, then *dhiyaa* has been used for fasting because *dhiyaa* only exists during the daytime, which is the time people fast. However, *noor* exists in both the daytime and nighttime. See al-Qaari, vol. 1, p. 320.

[2] The concept of patience was discussed in some detail in the commentary to Hadith Number 19.

Path.[1] This demonstrates the great importance of patience. During times of hardship, people easily stray from the Straight Path as they seek any solution to their problems, whether it is a permissible or forbidden solution. Similarly, during times of ease, when people have the wealth, time and ability to engage in forbidden acts, they need patience to keep them along the Straight Path. Hence, this light of patience at various levels is needed by everyone at practically all times.

Al-Sabbaagh points out one more important subtlety in calling patience a *dhiyaa`*. This, he says, implies that a small amount of patience can overcome a great deal of hardship and "dark times" in the same way that a small *dhiyaa`* can overcome a great deal of darkness.[2]

Al-Haitami also mentions that, as was noted above, the Quran has called the sun *dhiyaa`* and the moon *noor*. *Noor*, in this case, simply reflects the light of the source of light or *dhiyaa`*. In the same way, patience is called *dhiyaa`* because it is the real source. As explained in Hadith Number 19, patience includes the patience that is required to fulfill the obligatory deeds as well as remain away from the forbidden. Hence, without patience, there is no prayer, ablution, fasting and so forth. Patience in this sense is, in fact, the source for all of the other "light" that comes from prayer and other deeds. Therefore, it is truly the *dhiyaa`* or splendid and bright source of light.[3]

Allah has given patience precedence over prayers in the following verse,

وَٱسْتَعِينُوا۟ بِٱلصَّبْرِ وَٱلصَّلَوٰةِ ۚ وَإِنَّهَا لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلَّا عَلَى ٱلْخَٰشِعِينَ

"Seek help in patience and prayer. And truly this is hard except upon the true believers who humble themselves [to Allah]" (*al-Baqara* 45). Al-Haitami states that Allah has mentioned the most important aspect first (patience), followed by another important aspect (prayer). Al-Haitami also mentions the following verse,

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا لَمَّا صَبَرُوا۟ ۖ وَكَانُوا۟ بِـَٔايَٰتِنَا يُوقِنُونَ

"And We made from among them [the Tribes of Israel], leaders giving guidance under Our command, when they were patient and believed with certainty in Our signs" (*al-Sajdah* 24). Al-Haitami notes that Allah states the cause as, "when they were patient," and not, "when they prayed."[4]

Al-Qaari comments that patience is a *dhiyaa`* for the person in the grave. In other words, if a person has patience, meaning he fulfills the obligatory and avoids the forbidden, Allah will reward him by giving him light in the darkness and compact space of his grave.[1]

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[1] Al-Nawawi, *Sharh Saheeh*, vol. 3, p. 101.

[2] Al-Sabbaagh, p. 59. The same cannot be said for a small amount of light (*noor*).

[3] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 188.

[4] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 189.

"The Quran is either an argument for or against you."

In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) makes it clear that the Quran is either a proof for someone or a proof against him. There is no third, neutral party. One must be from one group or the other. This is similar to what Allah has said in the Quran,

وَنُنَزِّلُ مِنَ ٱلْقُرْءَانِ مَا هُوَ شِفَآءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَا يَزِيدُ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ إِلَّا خَسَارًا

"And We send down of the Quran that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe. And it increases the wrongdoers nothing but loss" (*al-Israa* 82).

This verse shows the diametrically opposite results that come about through the Quran. If a person turns to it with belief and seeks its guidance, it is a healing and a mercy. However, if a person ignores the Quran and refuses to follow it, that does not harm the Quran in any way. Indeed, that only harms the person himself. The Quran will then come as a witness against that person and will lead him to the Hell-fire.

Commenting on this verse, Qatada stated that no one sits with the Quran except that it will either increase or decrease him.[2] In other words, any time one listens to the Quran, it will either increase his faith and blessings or it will cause him greater harm due to his neglect of it. One of the early scholars stated that a person may be reading the Quran while the Quran is cursing him. For example, in the Quran, Allah curses the wrongdoers while the person himself is reading the Quran and not applying it. He is, therefore, one of the wrongdoers. He is reading his own curse and not even realizing it.[3]

One of the early scholars stated that no one sits with the Quran and stands up from it while remaining the same as he was before. Either he profited from it or he lost due to it. And then the person recited the above verse.[4] The Companion ibn Masood stated that if a person puts the Quran in front of him, as a guide, it will lead him to Paradise. If he puts it behind him, not using it as a guide, it will take him to the Hell-fire. On another occasion, he said, "The Quran will come on the Day of Resurrection. It will intercede for its companion and will be a guide to Paradise. Or it will come as a witness against him and drive him to the Hell-fire."[5]

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[1] Al-Qaari, vol. 1, p. 320.

[2] Quoted in al-Qurtubi, vol. 10, p. 321.

[3] Cf., al-Sabbaagh, p. 68.

[4] Quoted in ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 26.

[5] Quoted in ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 27.

Abu Musa al-Ashari, another Companion, stated, "This Quran will be a reward for you or it will be a burden upon you. Follow the Quran and do not have the Quran follow you up. For one who follows the Quran, he will descend with it into the gardens of Paradise. And for one who is followed up by the Quran, he will have it take him by the back of his neck and he will be thrown into the Hell-fire."[1]

The Quran is First and Foremost a Book of Guidance

In the opening verses of *surah al-Baqarah*, at the beginning of the Quran, it is explicitly mentioned that the Quran is guidance. This demonstrates the major goal of the Quran: to guide humanity to the Straight Path with all of its connotations. As Abdul Hameed Siddiqi wrote,

> This explains the main purpose of this Divine Book. This Book is primarily meant as a Book of right guidance for humanity. It is neither the Book explaining the fundamentals of physical sciences nor the laws of medical science, it is meant to guide people to the path of righteousness. This book is in fact a visible expression of a very favourable response from the Lord for the supplication made to Him in the concluding part of *Sura al-Fatiha* that Allah, in His infinite mercy, should direct the humanity on the right path.[2]

Although this point should be quite obvious, it is something that is often forgotten. People have a tendency to turn to the Quran for reasons other than trying to receive the guidance of how to believe and live. People read it for the sake of *barakah* (blessings) or to cure illnesses. Some read it as some sort of intellectual journey, learning about the past, metaphysics or to get some temporary spiritual high. When this occurs, and the Quran is not looked upon first and foremost as a book of guidance, the true blessing and teaching of the Quran is lost, although people might still continue to read it.[3]

It also should be noted that the guidance that it gives covers all realms of human life. In other words, it is not simply a guidance related to ritual matters. It guides man in its relation to his Lord, to other humans in society, and even to himself. The fundamental and guiding principles for social, political and financial life are all encompassed as part of its teachings and guidance.

The most important guidance it contains is the guidance related to knowing one's Lord and one's relationship with his Lord. Allah has made all of these matters very clear in the Quran. If a person sincerely turns to the Quran and sincerely seeks this guidance from the Quran, this Quran will be a proof or witness for him on the Day of Judgment. However, if a person turns away from the Quran and does not bother to benefit from what the Quran has to offer him, then the Quran will be a proof against him on the Day of Judgment.

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[1] Quoted in ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 28.

[2] Abdul Hameed Siddiqi, *The Holy Quran: English Translation and Explanatory Notes* (Lahore, Pakistan: Islamic Book Centre, n.d.), vol. 1, p. 11, fn. 5.

[3] See the author's "How to Approach and Understand the Quran" (I), *al-Basheer* (Vol. 5, No. 2, July-August 1991), pp. 11-14, for a more-detailed discussion of this point.

Allah's revealing of the Quran is one of the greatest blessings that He has bestowed upon mankind. There is virtually no excuse for anyone's not benefiting from the Quran. The meaning of the Quran is clear. Its message to all of mankind is clear. If a person does not turn to it, learn it and apply it, he will be misusing one of the greatest blessings from Allah. On the Day of Resurrection, he will have no argument on his behalf. Instead, it will be the Quran that will be a witness against him.

On the other hand, if a person turns to the Quran and benefits from this great blessing in a proper way, it will be a witness or proof for him on the Day of Judgment. He had followed the guidance that came from Allah and this was all that was required from him in this life. In the Hereafter, the Quran will be his guide to Paradise.

"And everyone goes out in the morning and sells himself, either freeing or destroying himself."

This part of the hadith is stating an important aspect of reality. Every day a human is faced with a new situation. Every morning he gets up, he is going to do something. Every day he is either going to obey Allah or he is going to disobey Allah. In essence, every day he is going to be setting himself free from the Hell-fire or leading himself to the Hell-fire and his own destruction. Like the stance toward the Quran, there is no third option. Every day of a person's life, he is either doing something that will set his soul free or he is doing something that will destroy himself. Even the person who sits and seemingly does absolutely nothing is, in reality, actually leading himself to some result.

Allah says in the Quran,

إِنَّ سَعْيَكُمْ لَشَتَّىٰ ﴿٤﴾ فَأَمَّا مَنْ أَعْطَىٰ وَٱتَّقَىٰ ﴿٥﴾ وَصَدَّقَ بِٱلْحُسْنَىٰ ﴿٦﴾
فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُۥ لِلْيُسْرَىٰ ﴿٧﴾ وَأَمَّا مَنۢ بَخِلَ وَٱسْتَغْنَىٰ ﴿٨﴾ وَكَذَّبَ بِٱلْحُسْنَىٰ
﴿٩﴾ فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُۥ لِلْعُسْرَىٰ

"Certainly, your efforts and deeds are diverse (different in aims and purposes); as for him who gives and keeps his duty to Allah and fears Him, and believes in a reward [from Allah], We will make smooth for him the path of ease [goodness]. But he who is greedy and thinks himself self-sufficient, and belies the good reward, We will make smooth for him the path for evil" (*al-Lail* 4-10).

The one who is successful is the one who sells himself to Allah or buys his freedom from Allah. Allah has said in the Quran,

إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ ٱشْتَرَىٰ مِنَ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَٰلَهُم بِأَنَّ لَهُمُ ٱلْجَنَّةَ ۚ
يُقَٰتِلُونَ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ فَيَقْتُلُونَ وَيُقْتَلُونَ ۖ وَعْدًا عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا فِى
ٱلتَّوْرَىٰةِ وَٱلْإِنجِيلِ وَٱلْقُرْءَانِ ۚ وَمَنْ أَوْفَىٰ بِعَهْدِهِۦ مِنَ ٱللَّهِ ۚ فَٱسْتَبْشِرُوا۟
بِبَيْعِكُمُ ٱلَّذِى بَايَعْتُم بِهِۦ ۚ وَذَٰلِكَ هُوَ ٱلْفَوْزُ ٱلْعَظِيمُ

"Verily, Allah has purchased of the believers their lives and their wealth for [the price] that theirs will be Paradise. They fight in Allah's cause, so they kill and are killed. It is a promise in truth which is binding on Him in the Torah and the Gospel and the Quran. And who is truer to his covenant than Allah? Then rejoice in the bargain which you have concluded. This is the supreme success" (*al-Tauba* 111). They have given their lives and wealth in this world for the sake of Allah. Actually, their lives and wealth were given to them by Allah. But, in His mercy, Allah will "take them back" in exchange for Paradise.

In another verse, Allah says,

وَمِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ مَن يَشْرِى نَفْسَهُ ٱبْتِغَآءَ مَرْضَاتِ ٱللَّهِ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ رَءُوفٌۢ
بِٱلْعِبَادِ

"And of mankind is he who would sell himself, seeking the pleasure of Allah. And Allah is full of kindness to [His] slaves" (*al-Baqara* 207).

These are the people who "sell themselves" for the sake of Allah. However, the disbelievers sell themselves to Satan, to this world or to their desires. Such a trade can never bring about anything beneficial because, in reality, these trading partners have nothing to offer. All that they can offer are delusions and promises that end up to be punishment in the Hereafter.

People sell themselves for money, power, lusts and so forth. Many times, they are willing to give up their dignity for these things. In reality, they are simply selling themselves in exchange for the Hell-fire. Their trade is an evil one indeed. This is why Allah describes some of the unbelievers in the following way,

وَلَبِئْسَ مَا شَرَوْا۟ بِهِۦٓ أَنفُسَهُمْ ۚ لَوْ كَانُوا۟ يَعْلَمُونَ

"And how bad indeed was that for which they sold their own souls, if they but knew" (*al-Baqara* 102).

Al-Qari explains this hadith by saying, “Everyone who abandons this world and gives preference to the Hereafter has purchased himself from his Lord for this world. Therefore, he sets himself free. Whoever abandons the Hereafter and gives preference to this world, then he is selling the Hereafter and is destroying himself.”[1]

Ibn Uthaimin gives a comparison between the believer and unbeliever in the light of this passage. He states that a believer gets up in the early morning and the first thing he does is make ablution and purify himself. And, “Purification is half of the faith.” Then he goes and prays. Hence, he is beginning his morning with *tauheed* and belief in Allah. Indeed, as soon as he awakes, before he even gets to making ablution, he should recite certain words of *dhikr*. He is indeed setting himself free from the Hell-fire.

On the other hand, an unbeliever gets up in disobedience to Allah. He does not remember Allah and does not begin his day with specific worship of Allah. In fact, the food and drink he gets in the morning will be a source of punishment in the Hereafter. The clothing he wears will be a source of punishment for him in the Hereafter. This is because they are all bounties from Allah, yet he refused to give gratitude to Allah for those bounties. Hence, everyday he is selling his soul and leading himself to his own destruction.[2]

Finally, the word that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used, بايع, implies one who exchanges something for something else. In that case, it applies equally well to a seller or a buyer. This is a type of speech in Arabic where the Prophet (peace be upon him) could have meant both aspects: buying and selling. In other words, every morning the person goes out and either buys himself from Allah or he sells himself to Satan.

Other Points Related to this Hadith

- This hadith demonstrates the great mercy and blessing of Allah. Allah has prescribed certain deeds that are very easy to perform. They do not require sacrifice of life or wealth; but their effects can be great on a person, while their reward in Allah’s sight is very great. These acts are the statements of *dhikr*: *al-hamdulillah* and *subhaanallaah*. When a person realizes how merciful Allah is in this regard, it should make him love Allah more and remember Him even more fervently.[3]
- Al-Sindi states that no one will have the right attitude toward the Quran until he truly realizes who the Sender is and who it is sent to. The Sender is Allah, the Master of the Day of Judgment, the One in whose Hand is the Dominions of the Heavens and the Earth. It is sent to mankind— those who are lost without the guidance from their Lord and who are in need of their

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[1] Al-Qaari, vol. 1, p. 321.
[2] Ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 1, p. 139.
[3] Al-Sabbaagh, p. 21.

Lord's help in every moment of their life. The Quran is the guidance that has come to them from their Lord. How can anyone ignore it and not apply it properly once he realizes exactly who it came from and what its purpose is? When a person realizes these aspects, he will turn to the Quran in the proper way and, in the Hereafter, the Quran will be a witness on his behalf.[1]

- The believer is precious and worthy of great dignity. He knows that his soul is worth more than anything that this world has to offer. Hence, he will sell it only to the most qualified buyer and for the best price. He will only sell it to his Lord and only for his Lord's pleasure. Anything else would be an insult to the dignity and honor that a believer should have, for he is one of Allah's noble creatures.[2]

Summary of the Hadith

- "Purification is half of the faith." This either means that purification, such as ablution, is so essential to the prayer that it becomes like half of the prayer, with the word "faith" meaning prayer here. Or it means that purifying oneself from associating partners with Allah or from committing sins fulfills half of the faith.
- The simple words, *al-hamdulillah,* when said with belief and adherence are very great in Allah's sight. Indeed, these words fill the scale.
- The words, *subhaanallaah* and *al-hamdulillah,* together are also so great that they fill what is between the heavens and the earth.
- "Prayer is a light" means that the effect of prayer is like a light of guidance. Prayer keeps the person away from performing evil deeds. In addition, prayer will be transformed into a light for the person to guide him to Paradise on the Day of Judgment.
- "Charity is a proof." Charity is a proof of one's true belief in Allah. On the Day of Resurrection, when the slave is asked about his wealth and how he spent it, his charity will come as a clear proof that he used his wealth properly.
- Patience is a brightness that every individual needs. Indeed, this brightness is the source of light and guidance. It is this light that guides the person to performing the obligatory deeds, abstaining from evil deeds and behaving properly in the face of every situation he meets.
- The Quran will either be a proof for the individual or a proof against him. There is no third category. Either the person believes in and obeys the Quran or he does not. If he does, it will be a witness on his behalf. If he does not, it will be a witness against him.

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[1] Al-Sindi, *Sharh al-Arbaeen*, p. 78.

[2] Cf., al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 170.

- Every day, whether the individual realizes this or not, he is either taking himself closer to his own rescue or to his own destruction. This is an inescapable fact of life. He can either free himself by selling himself to Allah or he can destroy himself by selling himself to Satan, his lusts or this world.

Hadith #24:
“O My Servants, I Have Forbidden Wrongdoing for Myself…”

عَنْ أَبِي ذَرٍّ الغِفَارِيِّ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّه
عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِيمَا يَرْوِيْهِ عَنِ رَبِّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ أَنَّهُ قَالَ يَا عِبَادِي
إِنِّي حَرَّمْتُ الظُّلْمَ عَلَى نَفْسِي وَجَعَلْتُهُ بَيْنَكُمْ مُحَرَّمًا فَلَا
تَظَالَمُوا يَا عِبَادِي كُلُّكُمْ ضَالٌّ إِلاَّ مَنْ هَدَيْتُهُ فَاسْتَهْدُونِي
أَهْدِكُمْ يَا عِبَادِي كُلُّكُمْ جَائِعٌ إِلاَّ مَنْ أَطْعَمْتُهُ فَاسْتَطْعِمُونِي
أُطْعِمْكُمْ يَا عِبَادِي كُلُّكُمْ عَارٍ إِلاَّ مَنْ كَسَوْتُهُ فَاسْتَكْسُونِي
أَكْسُكُمْ يَا عِبَادِي إِنَّكُمْ تُخْطِئُونَ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَأَنَا أَغْفِرُ
الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا فَاسْتَغْفِرُونِي أَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ يَا عِبَادِي إِنَّكُمْ لَنْ
تَبْلُغُوا ضَرِّي فَتَضُرُّونِي وَلَنْ تَبْلُغُوا نَفْعِي فَتَنْفَعُونِي يَا عِبَادِي
لَوْ أَنَّ أَوَّلَكُمْ وَآخِرَكُمْ وَإِنْسَكُمْ وَجِنَّكُمْ كَانُوا عَلَى أَتْقَى
قَلْبِ رَجُلٍ وَاحِدٍ مِنْكُمْ مَا زَادَ ذَلِكَ فِي مُلْكِي شَيْئًا يَا
عِبَادِي لَوْ أَنَّ أَوَّلَكُمْ وَآخِرَكُمْ وَإِنْسَكُمْ وَجِنَّكُمْ كَانُوا عَلَى
أَفْجَرِ قَلْبِ رَجُلٍ وَاحِدٍ مَا نَقَصَ ذَلِكَ مِنْ مُلْكِي شَيْئًا يَا
عِبَادِي لَوْ أَنَّ أَوَّلَكُمْ وَآخِرَكُمْ وَإِنْسَكُمْ وَجِنَّكُمْ قَامُوا فِي
صَعِيدٍ وَاحِدٍ فَسَأَلُونِي فَأَعْطَيْتُ كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مَسْأَلَتَهُ مَا نَقَصَ
ذَلِكَ مِمَّا عِنْدِي إِلاَّ كَمَا يَنْقُصُ الْمِخْيَطُ إِذَا أُدْخِلَ الْبَحْرَ يَا
عِبَادِي إِنَّمَا هِيَ أَعْمَالُكُمْ أُحْصِيهَا لَكُمْ ثُمَّ أُوَفِّيكُمْ إِيَّاهَا

فَمَنْ وَجَدَ خَيْرًا فَلْيَحْمَدِ اللَّهَ وَمَنْ وَجَدَ غَيْرَ ذَلِكَ فَلَا يَلُومَنَّ إِلاَّ نَفْسَهُ

رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ

On the authority of Abu Dharr al-Ghifaari, may Allah be pleased with him, from the Prophet (blessings of Allah and peace be upon him), from among the sayings he relates from his Lord (may He be glorified) that He said, "O My servants, I have forbidden wrongdoing for Myself and I have made it forbidden for you. Therefore, do not wrong one another. O My servants, all of you are lost except for those whom I have guided. Therefore, seek guidance from Me and I will guide you. O My servants, all of you are hungry except for those whom I have fed. Therefore, seek food from Me and I will feed you. O My servants, all of you are naked except for those whom I have clothed. Therefore, seek clothing from Me and I will clothe you. O My servants, you sin by night and by day, and I forgive all sins. Therefore, seek forgiveness from Me and I will forgive you. O My servants, you will not be able to harm Me so as to bring any harm to Me, and you will not be able to benefit Me so as to bring any benefit to Me. O My servants, if the first and last of you and the human and jinn of you were as pious as the most pious heart of anyone among you, it would not add anything to My dominion. O My servants, if the first and last of you and the human and jinn of you were as wicked as the most wicked heart of anyone among you, it would not decrease anything from My dominion. O My servants, if the first and last of you and the human and jinn of you were to gather together on [the same sector] of land and all asked of Me and if I were to give everyone of them what he asked, that would not decrease what I have any more than a needle decreases what is in the ocean when it is put into it. O My servants, it is but your deeds that I reckon for you. Then I recompense you for them. The one who finds good is to give praises to Allah. The one who finds other than this should not blame anyone but himself."

(Recorded by Muslim.)

Selected Vocabulary

يا - “O,” this is a term calling to someone or some people.
عبادي - “My servants,” the ي at the end makes it a possessive first person.
حرمت - “I have forbidden,” the تُ makes it past tense, first person.
الظلم - “oppression, injustice, wrongdoing”; see the discussion of its meaning below.
نفسي - “my soul, self,” نفس is soul or self; the ي at the end makes it a possessive, first person.
جعلته - “I have made it,” the ه at the end is the pronoun “it,” while the تُ again makes it past tense, first person.
بينكم - “among you” (plural)
فلا - “therefore, do not”
تظالموا - “oppress, wrong one another”
كلكم - “all of you”
ضال - “lost, astray, misguided”
هديته - “I have guided him”
فاستهدوني - “therefore, seek guidance from Me”, the ف represents, “therefore, then”; the س gives the inference of seeking something; the ي at the end, in this case, implies, “from Me”
جائع - “hungry”
أطعمته - “I fed him”
عار - “naked”
كسوته - “I clothed him”
تخطئون - “you (plural) commit sins”
بالليل - “by, during the night”
النهار - “the day”
الذنوب - “the sins”
جميعا - “all”
فاستغفروني- “therefore, seek forgiveness from Me”
تبلغوا - “reach, attain”
ضري - “harming Me”
نفعي - “benefiting Me”
أوّلكم - “first of you”
آخركم - “last of you”
أتقى - “most pious,” having the most *taqwa*
زاد - “added”
ملكي - “My dominion”
أفجر - “most wicked, most impious”
نقص - “decreased”
قاموا - “stand,” plural
فسألوني - “then ask of Me”
فأعطيت - “then I gave”
المخيط - “the needle”
دخل - “entered”
البحر - “the ocean”

أوفيكم	- "I recompense you," this comes from the word التوفية which implies a complete and proper recompense without any shortcoming, whether the recompense be good or evil.[1]
وجد	- "he found"
يلومنّ	- "he blames"

Takhreej

This hadith is authentic. It was recorded by Muslim, al-Bukhari in his book *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, ibn Khuzaima in his book *al-Tauheed*, al-Tabaraani in *al-Dua* and *Musnad al-Shaamiyeen*, al-Baihaqi, al-Haakim and many others through the chain of Saeed ibn Abdul Azeez from Rabeeah ibn Yazeed from Abu Idrees al-Khaulaani from Abu Dharr.

It was also recorded, with slightly different wording, by Muslim, Ahmad, al-Tayaalisi and ibn Khuzaima in *al-Tauheed* from Humaam from Qataadah from Abu Qilaabah from Abu Dharr. Abdul Razzaaq also records it from Mamar from Ayyoob from Abu Qilaabah from Abu Dharr.

Al-Tirmidhi, ibn Maajah, ibn Abu Shaibah and others recorded it from Shahr ibn Haushab from Abdul Rahmaan ibn Ghanam from Abu Dharr.[2] That narration includes the following passages that differ from the narration under discussion here:

يَا عِبَادِي كُلُّكُمْ مُذْنِبٌ إِلاَّ مَنْ عَافَيْتُ فَاسْتَغْفِرُونِي أَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَمَنْ عَلِمَ أَنِّي أَقْدِرُ عَلَى
الْمَغْفِرَةِ فَاسْتَغْفَرَنِي بِقُدْرَتِي غَفَرْتُ لَهُ وَلا أُبَالِي...

وَكُلُّكُمْ فَقِيرٌ إِلاَّ مَنْ أَغْنَيْتُ فَاسْأَلُونِي أُغْنِكْ...

كَذَلِكَ لا يَنْقُصُ مِنْ مُلْكِي ذَلِكَ بِأَنِّي جَوَادٌ مَاجِدٌ صَمَدٌ عَطَائِي كَلاَمٌ وَعَذَابِي كَلامٌ
إِذَا أَرَدْتُ شَيْئًا فَإِنَّمَا أَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ

"O My servants, all of you are sinners except for the ones I pardoned. Therefore, seek forgiveness from Me and I will forgive you. Whoever knows that I have the power to forgive and he then seeks My forgiveness by My power, I forgive Him and I don't mind… You are all poor except for the ones I enrich. Therefore, ask of Me and I will enrich you… That [giving to all of you] does not decrease My dominion. This is because I am generous, noble and self-sufficient. My giving is a word and my punishment is a word. If I want something, I say to it, 'Be' and it becomes."

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[1] Al-Mudaabaghi, p. 199.

[2] Cf., ibn Muhammad, p. 156.

General Comments About This Hadith

Al-Sindi stated that this is one of the most important hadith; it is a must to memorize it and ponder over its meanings as it has uncountable important points to it.[1] Sultaan points out that it prohibits all forms of injustice and oppression— thus leading to justice, which is one of the main goals of the *shareeah*. Furthermore, he states, it encourages one to pray to Allah for guidance and one's worldly needs, for supplication is one of the greatest forms of worship. The hadith also discusses some of the attributes of Allah, such as His being free of any need of this creation.[2]

Whenever Abu Idrees al-Khaulaani narrated this hadith, he would fall down on his knees out of respect and awe for what this hadith contains.[3]

About the Narrator: Abu Dharr al-Ghifaari

The life of Abu Dharr has already been discussed under Hadith Number 18.

From among the sayings he relates from his Lord (may He be glorified)

This means that this hadith is a *qudsi* hadith. *Qudsi* hadith are those hadith that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) related from the Lord. Mullah Ali al-Qaari has given the following excellent definition for hadith *qudsi*. He wrote,

> It is that which is related by the foremost of relaters and the most reliable of authorities, the best of blessings and salutations be upon him, from Allah, may He be glorified, sometimes through the medium of Gabriel, upon whom be blessings and peace, and sometimes by revelation, inspiration and dreams. Allah having entrusted to him the expressing of it in such words as he wished. It differs from the Quran in that the revelation of the latter was only through the medium of the Upright Soul [Gabriel] and is restricted to the wording specifically revealed from the Preserved Tablet...[4]

Such hadith usually take one of the following forms: (1) Some begin with, "The Prophet (peace be upon him) says from among the sayings he related from his Lord..." (2) Sometimes they begin with, "Allah the Almighty has said, from among the sayings related from Him by the Messenger of Allah..." (3) Or, "The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said that Allah has said..." (4) The words of Allah may be referred to as written instead of spoken. (5) Sometimes the words from Allah are between or introduced by a statement of the Messenger of Allah. (6) And, finally, an indirect but clear reference may be made to a statement of Allah in the words of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him).

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[1] Al-Sindi, *Sharh*, p. 84.

[2] Sultaan, p. 210.

[3] Cf., al-Nawawi, *Sharh Matn*, p. 104.

[4] Quoted in Ezzedin Ibrahim and Denys Johnson-Davies, *Forty Hadith Qudsi* (Beirut: The Holy Koran Publishing House, 1980), p. 8.

The Customarily Given Differences Between *Qudsi* Hadith and the Quran

One might ask what the differences between a *qudsi* hadith and the Quran are. Al-Qattaan has noted what is commonly considered the five differences between the two. They are:

(1) The Quran was revealed by Allah in both meaning and wording through the angel Gabriel to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). It was not received through any form of inspiration, such as a dream, vision and so forth. Hadith *qudsi*, on the other hand, may be received through any of those means.

(2) The Quran was established as a miracle and a challenge to all of mankind until the Day of Judgment. Hadith *qudsi* are not considered miraculous as such and are not a challenge to mankind.

(3) The Quran is only stated or related with reference to Allah. One can only say, for example, "Allah says in the Quran..." Hadith *qudsi*, on the other hand, are reports narrated by the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and, hence, are related from him from Allah.

(4) All of the Quran is *mutawaatir* and *qati'ee al-thaboot*.[1] The majority of the *qudsi* hadith do not meet the standards of *mutawaatir*. They are, therefore, subject to the rules and grading of hadith. Some such hadith are *sahih*, some are *hasan*, some are weak and others are fabricated.

(5) With respect to the Quran, both the wording and the meaning were revealed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) from Allah. With respect to hadith *qudsi*, only the meaning was revealed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) while the wording came from the Prophet himself. Therefore, it is allowed to narrate *qudsi* hadith according to their meanings only (for those who allow narration of hadith according to their meanings) but this is not allowed for the Quran.

(6) Finally, only the Quran is allowed for the recitation in the prayer. Furthermore, the one who recites it will receive ten rewards for each letter of

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[1] *Mutawaatir* means that the transmission has been continuous since the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to such an extent that it is inconceivable that all of the narrators coincidentally made the same mistake or all agreed upon a forgery. If a hadith is *mutawaatir*, it does not need to be graded under to the rules of hadith because it is authentic *a priori*. *Qati'ee al-thaboot*, "definitively confirmed", implies that no Muslim has the right to reject any part of it.

the Quran that he recites. Hadith *qudsi* may not be recited as part of the prayer nor is there any special reward for reciting hadith *qudsi.*[1]

Critique of the Customary Approach

There does not seem to be any room for dispute concerning (1), (2) (3) and (6) above. However, (4) and (5) need some clarification or comment.

It is not correct to say that one of the differences between *qudsi* hadith and the Quran is that all of the Quran is *mutawaatir* while *qudsi* hadith may be *sahih, hasan*, weak and so forth. Many scholars state that the conditions for a narration to be considered part of the Quran are three: (a) it must be *mutawaatir*, (b) it must be consistent with at least one of the copies of the Quran that Uthman distributed throughout the Muslims lands, and (c) it must be consistent with the Arabic language. However, if (a) is met, the other two conditions become redundant or superfluous. By definition, (a) implies that the report is such that it cannot be questioned or doubted. Hence, what is the need for the other two conditions? Some specialists in Quranic recitation state that the first condition is not that of being *mutawaatir* but only that the chain must be *sahih.*[2] Indeed, al-Namlah states what the scholars mean when they that the recital be *mutawaatir* is simply that it has an authentic chain back to the Prophet (peace be upon him),[3] and not the usage of the term *mutawaatir* according to the scholars of hadith. In this way, the other two conditions become meaningful because they ensure that, although the chain might be *sahih*, that no mistake has been made in the transmission of the recitation.

Furthermore, there are recitations of the Quran that are considered rejected or *shaadh* ("irregular"), since they do not meet the conditions stated above for the Quran. This is no different from saying that there are *qudsi* hadith that are weak or rejected. Hence, (3) above cannot be considered a true difference between the Quran and *qudsi* hadith.

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[1] Minaa al-Qattaan, *Mabaahith fi Uloom al-Quran* (Beirut: Muassasat al-Risaalah, 1981), pp. 25-29. Virtually the same points are also made in Sultan, pp. 210-212; Muhammad Ubaidaat, *Dirasaat fi Uloom al-Quran* (Amman, Jordan: Daar Ammaar, 1990), pp. 53-55; Ahmad Von Denffer, *Ulum Al-Quran: An Introduction to the Sciences of the Quran* (Leicester, United Kingdom: The Islamic Foundation, 1994), pp. 20-21.

[2] This is the conclusion of the experts in Quranic recitation, Makki ibn Abu Taalib and ibn al-Jaziri. [For quotes from them, see Ahmad al-Baili, *Al-Ikhtilaaf Bain al-Qiraat* (Beirut: Daar al-Jeel, 1988), p. 77; also see Khaalid al-Sabt, *Qawaaid al-Tafseer: Jamaan wa Diraasah* (al-Khobar, Saudi Arabia, 1997), vol. 1, pp. 84-85.] According to al-Funaisaan's doctoral thesis, such was also the opinion of ibn Taimiya, although al-Funaisaan did not give a reference for that opinion. See Saood al-Funaisaan, *Ikhtilaaf al-Mufassireen: Asbaabahu wa Athaarahu* (Riyadh: Daar Ishbeeliyyah, 1997), p. 85. This was also the conclusion of Hasan Itr in his thesis, *Al-Ahruf al-Sabah wa Manzalat al-Qiraat Minha* (Beirut: Daar al-Bashaair al-Islaamiyah, 1988), pp. 320-321. This conclusion does not affect the fact that the Quran is definitively confirmed. The Quran, as a whole, is *mutawaatir* but not every reading need be *mutawaatir* to be considered part of the Quran.

[3] Abdul Kareem al-Namlah, *Itihaaf Dhawee al-Basaair bi-Sharh Raudhat al-Naadhir fi Usool al-Fiqh ala Madhhab al-Imaam Ahmad ibn Hanbal* (Riyadh: Daar al-Aasimah, 1996), vol. 2, p. 304.

Finally, if one is talking about the essential difference between the Quran and *qudsi* hadith, it is irrelevant to discuss whether one is *mutawaatir* and the other is not. Obviously, the essential differences between them existed at the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) when the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself narrated these statements. At that time, there was no concept of *mutawaatir* and the Prophet (peace be upon him) would sometimes send individual teachers to specific tribes to teach the Quran. Hence, the question of *mutawaatir* is completely irrelevant to the issue of the difference in nature between *qudsi* hadith and the Quran.

There is also a difference of opinion concerning the wording of *qudsi* hadith. Does that wording come from Allah or does it come from the Prophet (peace be upon him)? As stated above in (4), al-Qattaan is of the view that its wording is from the Prophet (peace be upon him). Al-Sabbaagh is also of this opinion. He states that if the wording and meaning were both from Allah, then, from the *shareeah* point of view, it should be given the same status as the Quran. He claims that there would then be no reason to distinguish between the two wordings from Allah. He then argues that if that were the case, it would not be allowed to narrate a *qudsi* hadith according to its meaning (which the scholars say is acceptable). He also states that then it could be used in worship like the Quran, but no scholar says that.

Al-Sabbaagh then poses the following question, "If the wording is not from Allah, why is the quote attributed to Allah?" Al-Sabbaagh states that this is not problematic and is common in the Arabic language. It implies that what the quotation contains of meaning is from Allah and not that the exact words are from Allah. He argues that this is similar to Allah quoting the previous prophets in the Quran and saying, for example, "Moses said," while, in fact, Moses did not speak Arabic and those are not his exact words.[1] Those quotes only contain the meaning of what Moses said. Al-Sabbaagh then quotes Mustafa al-Zarqa as saying that *qudsi* hadith are like giving a person a text to translate. The translated text is still ascribed to the original speaker although the wording is not his.[2]

But that inevitably leads to the following question: If *qudsi* hadith are simply inspired by Allah and in the Prophet's wording, what is the difference then between *qudsi* hadith and the remainder of the Prophet's speech which was also inspired by Allah? The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) stated,

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[1] Obviously, in such a case, that fact is understood by the listener, since the listener knows that Moses, for example, did not preach in Arabic. However, there is no need to make that assumption with respect to quoting what has been inspired from Allah. Allah can make that revelation in Arabic.

[2] Al-Sabbaagh, pp. 84-86. He also makes the argument that the Quran is *mutawaatir* while *qudsi* hadith are not.

أَلاَ إِنِّي أُوتِيتُ الْكِتَابَ وَمِثْلَهُ مَعَهُ

"Certainly, I have been given the Book and what is similar to it with it."[1] Furthermore, there are numerous verses in the Quran to the effect of the following verses,

وَأَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ وَٱلْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَكَ مَا لَمْ تَكُن تَعْلَمُ ۚ وَكَانَ فَضْلُ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ عَظِيمًا

"Allah has sent down [revealed] to you the Book and the *Hikmah* and taught you that which you know not. And Ever Great is the Grace of Allah unto you" (*al-Nisaa* 113).

هُوَ ٱلَّذِى بَعَثَ فِى ٱلْأُمِّيِّـۧنَ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُوا۟ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايَٰتِهِۦ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ وَٱلْحِكْمَةَ وَإِن كَانُوا۟ مِن قَبْلُ لَفِى ضَلَٰلٍ مُّبِينٍ

"He [Allah] it is Who sent among the unlettered ones a Messenger from among themselves, reciting to them His Verses, purifying them, and teaching them the Book and the *Hikmah*[2]. And, verily, they had been before in manifest error" (*al-Jumuah* 2). Allah also says,

وَٱذْكُرْنَ مَا يُتْلَىٰ فِى بُيُوتِكُنَّ مِنْ ءَايَٰتِ ٱللَّهِ وَٱلْحِكْمَةِ ۚ

"And remember that which is recited in your houses of the Verses of Allah and the *Hikmah*" (*al-Ahzaab* 34).[3]

Commenting on verses of this nature, al-Shafi'ee stated,

> I have heard from those with whom I am pleased of the people of knowledge of the Quran who said that the *Hikmah* is the sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). This is the most likely opinion, Allah knows best. This is because the Quran has been mentioned and is followed by mention of the *Hikmah.* Allah also mentioned His bounties upon His creation by their being taught the Book and *Hikmah.* Therefore, it is not allowed, Allah knows best, to call the *Hikmah* here anything

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[1] Recorded by Ahmad and Abu Dawood. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih.* See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 1, p. 516. Hence, the Prophet (peace be upon him) received two forms of revelation. One is recited in the Book or Quran. The second, his sunnah, is not recited but it is also revelation from Allah.

[2] *Hikmah* literally means, "wisdom". However, to translate it in such a general sense in this verse may not be proper, as the text above demonstrates.

[3] Also see *al-Baqara* 231 for another verse with clear reference to the revelation of *al-Hikmah.*

> other than the sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him).[1]

In other words, the sunnah as a whole is considered a form of "inspiration" from Allah but in the wording of the Prophet (peace be upon him).[2] What then would distinguish *qudsi* hadith from other hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) if the inspiration in both cases is from Allah and the wording from the Prophet (peace be upon him)? In this case, also, there is no need for the Prophet (peace be upon him) to state, "Allah said," when, in fact, the words did not come from Allah.

Perhaps, this is an issue that cannot be resolved based on the information available. There is no strong evidence to definitively conclude that the wording of *qudsi* hadith comes from either Allah or the Prophet (peace be upon him). Personally, this author leans toward the view that the wording comes directly from Allah.

The important point is that such *qudsi* hadith are known not to be part of the Quran. This is known from the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself. The Prophet (peace be upon him) would distinguish between the Quran and *qudsi* hadith. Whenever a verse of the Quran was revealed to him, he would call one of his scribes— and he had specific scribes for the recording of the Quran, such as Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthmaan, Zaid ibn Thaabit and others. He would then tell the scribe to place that newly revealed verse in *surah* such and such.[3] Furthermore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) never recited *qudsi* hadith in the prayers nor did he read them back to the Angel Gabriel when going over the Quran.

The important matter, then, is that the *qudsi* hadith were distinguished from the Quran by the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself. This is how it is known that such statements from Allah do not form part of the Quran. However, this in itself does not rule out the possibility that the wording of *qudsi* hadith are from Allah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) narrated them as Allah's words and this is probably the strongest indication concerning this matter. This implies that they are words from Allah but it was made clear to the Prophet (peace be upon him) that they did not form part of the Quran. This direct inspiration of wording is what distinguishes them from the remainder of the statements of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

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[1] Muhammad ibn Idrees al-Shafi'ee, *al-Risaalah* (Ahmad Shakir, ed., no other publication information given), p. 78.

[2] An excellent discussion demonstrating that the sunnah is a revelation from Allah may be found in al-Husain Shawaat (al-Houcine Chouat), *Hujjiyat al-Sunnah* (Falls Church, VA: American Open University, n.d.), pp. 29-37.

[3] This was reported by ibn Abbaas and Uthmaan. Such reports have been recorded by al-Tirmidhi, Ahmad, ibn Hibbaan, al-Haakim and others. Cf., Khaalid al-Ik, *Tareekh Tautheeq Nass al-Quran al-Kareem* (Beirut: Daar al-Fikr, 1986), pp. 30-31; Muhammad Abu Shahbah, *al-Madkhal li-Diraasat al-Quran al-Kareem* (Cairo: Maktabah al-Sunnah, 1992), pp. 241-243.

"O My servants"

Allah begins His statement by calling to human beings with the term, "My servants". This is significant for a number of reasons. First, from the point of view of the human, it highlights the relationship between the ones being addressed and the speaker. Allah is their Lord and Master. They are His servants and slaves. Reminding the listeners of this fact at the beginning should make them very attentive to what is about to be said. It is not coming from just anyone but it is coming from their Master and Lord.

Second, it also demonstrates the relationship between Allah and humans. He is the Master and Lord of the Creation. He is not in need of them. They cannot benefit Him at all. They are simply His slaves that He created that if He willed, He could make them all believers or all disbelievers. Indeed, if He willed, He could do away with all of them. This aspect is directly related to the message that is given in this hadith.

Furthermore, as Taataay points out, this address is general for all of mankind. It is not specific to any time or place. All of mankind are Allah's servants. The following prohibition of *dhulm* is not something that is specific to the Nation of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Indeed, it was something that was taught to all of mankind and passed on in all of the genuine religions.[1]

"I have forbidden wrongdoing (*dhulm*) for Myself"

The Meaning of the Word *Dhulm*

Lane's *Lexicon* defines *dhulm* thusly,

> ظَلَمَ [*dhalama*] when intransitive usually means he did wrong; or acted wrongfully, unjustly, injuriously, or tyrannically: and when trans., he wronged; or treated, or used, wrongfully, unjustly, injuriously, or tyrannically... الظُّلْم [*al-dhulm*] signifies the putting a thing in a place not its own; putting it in a wrong place; misplacing it;... and it is by exceeding or falling short, or by deviating from the proper time and place: or the acting in whatsoever way one pleases in the disposal of the property of another: and the transgressing the proper limit;... or, according to some, it primarily signifies النَّقص (as meaning the making to suffer loss, or detriment).[2]

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[1] Muhammad Taataay, *Eedhaah al-Maani al-Khafiyyah fi al-Arbaeen al-Nawawiyyah* (Al-Mansoorah, Egypt: Daar al-Wafaa, 1994), p. 189.

[2] Lane, vol. 2, p. 1920.

Allah Does not Commit*Dhulm*

In numerous places in the Quran, Allah has denied that He has ever or would ever commit any wrongdoing or injustice toward anyone. For example, Allah has said,

وَلَا يَظْلِمُ رَبُّكَ أَحَدًا

"And your Lord treats no one with injustice" (*al-Kahf* 49). Allah also says,

إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ

"Surely, Allah wrongs not [even to the extent] of the weight of an atom" (*al-Nisaa* 40). Another verse states,

وَمَا ٱللَّهُ يُرِيدُ ظُلْمًا لِّلْعَٰلَمِينَ

"Allah wills no injustice to the world" (*ali-Imraan* 108).[1]

Hence, it is clear that Allah never has and never will commit any form of wrong. But the scholars differ as to how this phrase, "I have forbidden oppression for Myself," should be interpreted. This difference is a reflection of a greater difference related to issues of belief and textual interpretation.[2] Here, two approaches or understandings of this phrase shall be given.

One Approach to Understanding This Phrase

The first approach is to say that *dhulm* is something that was theoretically possible for Allah but that He has himself forbidden it for Himself and has removed its possibility. But if everything in this creation actually belongs to Allah and there is no authority greater than Him that He could wrong, what kind of *dhulm* could Allah have possibly committed? The answer to this question may be found in the verse,

وَمَن يَعْمَلْ مِنَ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَا يَخَافُ ظُلْمًا وَلَا هَضْمًا

"And he who works deeds of righteousness, while he is a believer, then he will have no fear of injustice, nor of any curtailment [of his reward]" (*Taha* 112).

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[1] Other relevant verses include *Qaaf* 29, *Ghaafir* 31 and *Fussilat* 46.

[2] Ibn Taimiya wrote, "The people dispute the meaning of this *dhulm*. They have become two extremes with a middle group in between them. And the best of affairs is the middle approach." Ibn Taimiya, *Majmoo*, vol. 18, p. 137. Those who deny *qadar* and the fact that Allah creates humans' actions state that if Allah ordered two people to perform one deed and then He aided one of them in its performance, this would be an injustice on His part. In other words, they consider Allah not bestowing a certain blessing upon someone as a form of injustice. (Cf., ibn Taimiya, *Majmoo*, vol. 18, p. 137.) They have ignored the fact that Allah has done such based on His knowledge and wisdom— He does not force a person to do a good deed if that person himself does not will or desire to do it. Therefore, His actions, based on His knowledge and wisdom, are fair and just.

Ibn Taimiya pointed out that the earliest scholars of Quranic commentary noted that the meaning of this verse is that a person does not have to fear that he may be punished for the sin of another,[1] nor does he have to fear that he may not get the full reward for a deed he committed. This, ibn Taimiya, argues is not something that is inconceivable or *a priori* not permissible for God. Indeed, God could have allowed for Himself that ability but He has decreed for Himself, in truth and justice and as a mercy for His servants, that He would never perform such an act.[2]

Allah has denied that He would ever commit *dhulm* in this hadith and He has specifically denied that He would ever commit that specific form of *dhulm*. Allah has also said in the Quran,

أَمْ لَمْ يُنَبَّأْ بِمَا فِى صُحُفِ مُوسَىٰ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَإِبْرَٰهِيمَ ٱلَّذِى وَفَّىٰٓ ﴿٣٧﴾ أَلَّا تَزِرُ
وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَأَن لَّيْسَ لِلْإِنسَٰنِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَىٰ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَأَنَّ
سَعْيَهُۥ سَوْفَ يُرَىٰ ﴿٤٠﴾ ثُمَّ يُجْزَىٰهُ ٱلْجَزَآءَ ٱلْأَوْفَىٰ ﴿٤١﴾

"Or is he not informed of what is in the pages [scripture] of Moses and of Abraham who fulfilled all that [Allah ordered him]: That no soul shall bear the burden of another and that man can have nothing but what he strives for and that his deeds will be seen. Then he will be recompensed with a full and best recompense" (*al-Najm* 36-41).

The matter is not simply a denial of *dhulm*. It is also and more importantly, according to ibn Taimiya, an affirmation of its opposite, justice, on the part of Allah. Even when Allah punishes a people, it is solely based on what is just, according to their deeds. When He rewards a people, however, it is a grace and mercy from Allah. Hence, as ibn Uthaimeen points out, all of Allah's acts are either acts of justice or grace. There is no third category of *dhulm*.[3] Such has been stated by the Prophet (peace be upon him) who said,

لَوْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَذَّبَ أَهْلَ سَمَاوَاتِهِ وَأَهْلَ أَرْضِهِ لَعَذَّبَهُمْ وَهُوَ غَيْرُ ظَالِمٍ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ رَحِمَهُمْ
لَكَانَتْ رَحْمَتُهُ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ مِنْ أَعْمَالِهِمْ

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[1] That would obviously be unjust. However, this is a common Christian conception concerning God. They claim that Adam committed a sin that tainted all of mankind— even though it was only Adam who committed that sin and not the rest of mankind. In any case, that sin could only be forgiven by God sending His son as a sacrifice. This seems to be another form of injustice: no human could remove that sin from himself but only an act by another, the supposed son of God, could remove that sin.

[2] Cf., Ibn Taimiya, *Majmoo*, vol. 18, p. 131.

[3] Ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 3, p. 138.

"If Allah were to punish the inhabitants of His heavens and the inhabitants of His earth, He would punish them and He would not be doing injustice to them. If He were to show mercy to them, His mercy would be better than [what they deserve from] their deeds."[1] Indeed, Allah multiplies the reward for every good deed out of His grace and reckons every evil deed as one deed, without multiplication, out of His justice.

Then ibn Taimiya argues that if *dhulm* were not possible for Allah, as some people argue, then this statement of Allah's would not be a complementary one nor would it make much sense. If a person avoids a blameworthy act, such avoidance is only praiseworthy if he had the ability to do the act in the first place. For example, one does not praise a blind person because he does not look at what is forbidden.[2] Similarly, Allah is to be praised for His justice because He has determined that for Himself while he could have decreed otherwise. Additionally, it does not make any sense for Allah to say, "I have forbidden for Myself," concerning a matter that He is not able to do. Again, a blind person would not be making any sense if he were to say, "I have forbidden for myself the looking at forbidden sights."

Ibn Taimiya continues by noting that *dhulm* includes placing something in a place it does not belong. It is known that Allah acts justly and He does not put anything in any place where it does not belong. But this is not because He could not have done so. This is because He has willed not to do so and, in fact, it is because He dislikes such acts. Therefore, He has forbidden such acts upon Himself.[3]

Ibn Taimiya summarizes his interpretation of this phrase by saying,

> This makes clear the middle approach. In other words: The *dhulm* that Allah has forbidden for Himself includes things like not rewarding the doer of good for his good deeds, punishing an innocent person for sins he did not commit, punishing a person for sins that another committed, not judging justly among mankind and so forth. These are the types of actions that the Lord is free of due to His equity and justice, although He has the ability to do them. Therefore, He is deserving of praise and glorification because He avoided those acts of *dhulm* although He had the ability to do them. In the same way that Allah is free of any blameworthy or shortcoming attributes, He is also free and exalted above any blameworthy or shortcoming actions.[4]

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[1] Recorded by Abu Dawood and ibn Maajah. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh Sunan Abi Dawood*, vol. 3, p. 890.

[2] This example was taken from al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 191. It forms part of his presentation of this view which he then goes on to refute.

[3] Ibn Taimiya, *Majmoo*, vol. 18, pp. 143-145.

[4] Ibn Taimiya, *Majmoo*, vol. 18, p. 146.

The conclusion is that Allah, in His Mercy and by His Wisdom, has decreed for Himself that He will commit no injustice. It is not the case that "by His nature" it was impossible for Him to have committed injustice. He definitely has the ability to commit many forms of injustice but He, no one else, has determined that He would not commit them. Allah alone has determined for Himself to act in this manner. Understanding this fact should increase the believers' love for Allah. It should also increase their glorification and praise of Him.

This approach toward this phrase of the hadith— that Allah could commit *dhulm* but that He has forbidden it for Himself— is the approach of ibn Taimiya, ibn Rajab,[1] Sultaan,[2] al-Sabbaagh[3] and ibn Uthaimeen.[4]

A Second Approach

Other scholars take a very different approach to this phrase, "I have forbidden *dhulm*..." According to them, Allah is exalted and purified from committing any type of *dhulm* by His essence. In other words, *dhulm* is an *a priori* impossibility on Allah's part.

They come to this conclusion by saying that *dhulm* is to violate another person's right without due right or to go beyond the limits. This in their view is the only proper meaning for the word *dhulm*. They say that both cases are impossible with respect to Allah because Allah is the Owner and King of all creation and no one has any rights upon Him.

Al-Haitami argues that, in this hadith, the purpose is not to demonstrate one of Allah's attributes for which He must be praised. Hence, the argument that He must be able to commit *dhulm* as otherwise this would not be a praiseworthy statement is irrelevant. He argues that the point of this statement is to emphasize the prohibition of *dhulm*. If it is "forbidden" for Allah, then it must be even more so "forbidden" for His servants. This is a common form of exaggerating or stressing a statement in Arabic that no one, says al-Haitami, can refute. It is the same rhetorical style that Allah uses in the verse that was addressed to the Prophet (peace be upon him),

وَلَقَدْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ وَإِلَى ٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكَ لَئِنْ أَشْرَكْتَ لَيَحْبَطَنَّ عَمَلُكَ
وَلَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ ٱلْخَٰسِرِينَ

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[1] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 35.

[2] Sultaan, p. 215. It seems that Sultaan prefers this choice. He wrote (p. 215), "If Allah willed to commit *dhulm* no one could prevent Him from that." Despite that, right after stating this, he quoted al-Nawawi as saying that *dhulm* is an impossibility on Allah's part since all of the creation belongs to Allah. Apparently, he did not notice that al-Nawawi's view contradicts what he had just stated. Allah knows best.

[3] Al-Sabbaagh, p. 93.

[4] Ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 3, pp. 138-139.

"And indeed it has been revealed to you [O Muhammad], as it was to those before you, if you join others in worship Allah, [then] surely all your deeds will be in vain, and you will certainly be among the losers" (*al-Zumar* 65). This verse does not imply that the Prophet (peace be upon him) may conceivably commit *shirk*. Instead, it is meant to emphasize the prohibition of *shirk* and how even if the Prophet (peace be upon him) were to commit it, all of his deeds would then be in vain.

According to al-Haitami, this is the view of the majority of the scholars.[1] It is the view of al-Nawawi,[2] al-Ubayy,[3] al-Azhari,[4] al-Bugha and Mistu,[5] Taataay[6] and al-Baitaar.[7]

Conclusion Regarding the Meaning of This Phrase

The view of ibn Taimiya and others discussed above seems to be the stronger approach. It is more consistent with the literal meaning of this hadith and is consistent with the general meaning of *dhulm*. It is also consistent with the explanation of some verses of the Quran, as noted above. The other view represents a form of reinterpretation (*taweel*) that is not necessary or needed, while *taweel* is only to be resorted to in cases of need.[8]

The understanding of the first approach gives more meaning to this hadith. The result is that one praises and thanks Allah for His decree that He will not commit any form of *dhulm*. This should make Allah even more beloved in the hearts of His servants. Allah knows best.

Another Related Point

Some commentators point out that what this portion of the hadith implies is that one cannot pray to Allah for help in committing any form of wrongdoing or oppression. For example, when in an dispute with another, one can only pray to Allah to bring about what is true and correct, and not *dhulm*. This is because Allah has forbidden *dhulm* for Himself. He would not wrong any of His servants. Therefore, how could He be expected to help one person wrong another?[9]

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[1] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 191.
[2] Al-Nawawi, *Sharh Saheeh*, vol. 5, p. 439.
[3] Al-Ubayy, vol. 7, p. 28.
[4] Al-Azhari, p. 49.
[5] Al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 173.
[6] Taataay, p. 185.
[7] Al-Baitaar, p. 148.
[8] See al-Harbi, vol. 1, pp. 137ff.
[9] Cf., ibn Daqeeq al-Eid, *Sharh*, p. 65.

"and I have made it[1] forbidden for you"

Ibn Taimiya states that this statement covers all of the religion. Everything that Allah has forbidden is, in one way or another, a type of *dhulm*, while everything that He has ordered is a form of *adl* or justice.[2] In fact, Allah has said,

لَقَدۡ أَرۡسَلۡنَا رُسُلَنَا بِٱلۡبَيِّنَٰتِ وَأَنزَلۡنَا مَعَهُمُ ٱلۡكِتَٰبَ وَٱلۡمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ ٱلنَّاسُ
بِٱلۡقِسۡطِۖ وَأَنزَلۡنَا ٱلۡحَدِيدَ فِيهِ بَأۡسٞ شَدِيدٞ وَمَنَٰفِعُ لِلنَّاسِ وَلِيَعۡلَمَ ٱللَّهُ مَن
يَنصُرُهُۥ وَرُسُلَهُۥ بِٱلۡغَيۡبِۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٞ

"Indeed, We have sent Our messengers with clear proofs, and revealed with them the Scripture and the Balance (justice) that mankind may establish justice. And We brought forth iron wherein is mighty power as well as many benefits for mankind, that Allah may test those who will help Him and His messengers, while unseen. Verily, Allah is All-Strong, All-Mighty" (*al-Hadeed* 25). So the messengers were sent, books revealed and the balance made so that mankind may establish and live by justice. Furthermore, iron has been created so that it may be used for the sake of truth and justice. The book guides to justice and the sword and iron assists it.[3]

The Companions understood well that the establishment of justice was one of the key goals of the religion of Islam. When asked by the Emperor of Persia what brought the Muslims to their lands, two different Companions answered in similar terms: "Allah has sent us to take whoever wishes from the servitude of mankind to the servitude of Allah, and from the tightness of this world to its expanse, and from the injustice of the ways of life [in this world] to the justice of Islam."[4]

The point is that mankind must establish justice. However, justice is only established by following what Allah has revealed. The polytheists established some of their own practices and forbid many things without any authority from Allah. Allah revealed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) to tell them that such are not the just matters that Allah has ordered him to do. Instead, Allah says,

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[1] The Arabic word translated here as, "made it" is *jal* (جعل). This word is used in a legal sense, as is the case here, to mean "order something". It can also be used in a cosmic or creational sense, meaning that Allah created or made something in a specific way. In the Quran, *al-Naba* 10-11 is an example of the word used in a cosmic sense. In *al-Maaidah* 103, the word is used in its legal sense. Cf., ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 3, pp. 139-140.

[2] Ibn Taimiya, *Majmoo*, vol. 18, p. 166.

[3] Ibn Taimiya, *Majmoo*, vol. 18, p. 158.

[4] Ismaaeel ibn Katheer, *Al-Bidaaya wa al-Nihaaya* (Beirut: Daar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, 1985), vol. 7, pp. 39-40.

قُلْ أَمَرَ رَبِّى بِٱلْقِسْطِ ۖ وَأَقِيمُوا۟ وُجُوهَكُمْ عِندَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَٱدْعُوهُ
مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ ٱلدِّينَ ۚ

"Say: My Lord has commanded me justice and that you should face Him alone in every place of worship, and invoke Him alone, making your faith sincere for Him" (*al-Araaf* 29).

The greatest justice is *tauheed* and the greatest injustice is *shirk* (associating partners with Allah). The Prophet (peace be upon him) was once asked what is the greatest sin. He answered,

أَنْ تَجْعَلَ لِلَّهِ نِدًّا وَهُوَ خَلَقَكَ

"It is that you associate a partner with Allah while He created you." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.) Allah is the only One with attributes that make Him worthy of worship. Allah also created every human and bestowed upon each numerous bounties. For humans to then turn to others and worship others alongside Allah is the greatest form of injustice. Allah bestows on them bounties and then they worship and thank others. This is like a person doing a favor for someone and then that person goes and thanks a third person for the favor. Such is not proper or just behavior by any means.

The true source of justice and truth is to be found in what Allah has revealed. The greatest source of evil and injustice is the ignoring of what Allah has revealed. Allah describes those who do not abide by what He has revealed as the wrongdoers and oppressors. Allah says,

وَمَن لَّمْ يَحْكُم بِمَآ أَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُ فَأُو۟لَـٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلظَّـٰلِمُونَ

"Whoever does not rule by what Allah has revealed, such are the wrongdoers" (*al-Maaidah* 45).

Allah knows what is truth and justice. In His mercy, He has revealed the Books and sent Messengers to establish that true justice. However, ignorant humans actually turn their back on Allah's revelations in the name of justice. They believe that they can establish justice through their own man-made laws and systems. Democratic movements, liberal slogans, secularist philosophies, women's liberation movements[1] and so forth are all, they claim, meant to bring about justice. But they can never bring about justice. They can never bring about justice because their very foundation is an extreme case of injustice or *dhulm*. Their very foundation is to ignore Allah as the source of guidance and to replace Him by man himself. This is putting man in the place of God and there can be no greater injustice than that. This is the reality although they may not realize it or they may claim to be calling to what is just and good.

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[1] Unfortunately, many Muslim women today— as well as many Muslim men— have fallen into listening to the slogans of the disbelievers. They have concluded that the laws of Islam are not "fair" or "just" to women. They must realize that if fairness and justice are not to be found in Allah's revelation, then they are nowhere to be found. It is only Allah who has the all-encompassing knowledge to know exactly what is fair and just in society. He is the One with the knowledge to know what the responsibilities of each and every individual should be. Allah created men and women with clear differences while many feminist leaders are trying to remove any semblance of differences between the two sexes. Surely nothing can be more unjust than the

The Types of *Dhulm*

In this hadith, Allah has forbidden *dhulm* in a general sense, including all of its various forms. There are three major different forms of *dhulm*. They are the following:

(1) The *dhulm* that the person commits to himself by acts of disobedience to Allah: This type of *dhulm* comprises many acts but the most heinous of them, as mentioned above, is to ascribe partners to Allah. Allah has said in the Quran, quoting and, therefore, approving of what Luqman said,

إِنَّ ٱلشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ

"Verily, joining others in worship [with Allah] is a great form of *dhulm* indeed" (*Luqmaan* 13).[1] Commenting on this verse, al-Maidaani wrote,

> Truly associating partners with Allah is great wrongdoing (*dhulm*). This is because it is Allah's right upon His servants that they believe in Him, worship Him alone and not ascribe as partner anyone in His worship. Furthermore, they must obey Him by abiding by what He has ordered and abstaining from what He has prohibited. Whoever worships someone other than Allah, in a manner that Allah is to be worshipped, is placing his worship in an improper place. He is taking a creation of Allah's creation and making him equal to Allah, even if just in a specific matter or attribute. All of that is great *dhulm*... Scientifically speaking, this is *dhulm* because no one other than Allah is deserving of being worshipped other than Him or alongside Him. Morally speaking it is also *dhulm*. This is because Allah alone is the Creator, the Sustainer, the One who bestows life, will, intelligence and all other great blessings. He is the giver of Life and the One who brings about

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call to ignore any differences while differences do, in fact, exist. This is not to deny the fact that in many Muslim countries, Muslim women do not get the rights that are given to them by the *shareeah*. This is also an injustice and wrong. Injustice comes about whenever the *shareeah* is neglected or ignored. The only remedy for such problems is not a modernist movement or a reinterpretation of the faith but a true, sincere and complete return to the Quran and sunnah.

[1] Ibn Rajab and al-Haitami point out that the most common meaning in the Quran for *dhulm* and *dhaalimeen* (those who commit *dhulm*) is *shirk* and disbelief (*kufr*). For example, Allah says, "The disbelievers are the *dhaalimoon*" (*al-Baqara* 254). See ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 36; al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 193.

> death. He brings about all good things. Morally speaking, it is obligatory upon a human who has received all of these blessings and good things from his one Lord that he thank Him alone for those bounties, believe in Him alone as the creating Lord, submit to Him alone, worship Him alone and not join anyone as a partner to Him in his worship.[1]

In addition to this, any kind of sinful behavior is a type of *dhulm* against oneself. The sinner is harming himself and not behaving properly toward his own soul when he commits a sin. This is why Allah describes going beyond the limits He has set as a kind of *dhulm*. Allah says,

وَمَن يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ ٱللَّهِ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُۥ ۚ

"And whosoever transgresses the set limits of Allah, then indeed he has wronged himself" (*al-Talaaq* 1).

(2) The *dhulm* that a person commits toward others: Any kind of harm that a person does to another is a form of *dhulm* and is forbidden. A Muslim may not harm another's honor, wealth or life. The Prophet (peace be upon him) made that clear when he said,

كُلُّ الْمُسْلِمِ عَلَى الْمُسْلِمِ حَرَامٌ دَمُهُ وَمَالُهُ وَعِرْضُهُ

"All of a Muslim is inviolable to every other Muslim, with respect to his blood, wealth and honor." (Recorded by Muslim.) If a person strikes, abuses, curses, cheats, backbites or harms another person or if he helps another wrongly against someone, falsely accuses someone, lies about someone, and so forth, then he is committing *dhulm*.[2] In fact, if a person prevents another from getting his due rights, he has committed *dhulm*. *Dhulm* is also inclusive of the misuse of power by people in positions of authority.

(3) A third type of *dhulm* is that committed toward the other creatures Allah has created or toward creation in general. For example, if a person kills an animal just for sport or play, he has committed *dhulm*. If a person mutilates an animal, he has committed *dhulm* and is deserving of being cursed. Al-Bukhari records from ibn Umar that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) cursed the person who mutilated animals.[3]

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[1] Abdul Rahmaan Habankah al-Maidaani, *Al-Akhlaaq al-Islaami wa Ususuhaa* (Damascus: Daar al-Qalam, 1992), vol. 2, pp. 92-93.

[2] The word *dhulm* is often translated as "oppression" and this gives some people the impression that it refers only to, for example, the relationship between a ruler and his subjects. However, although that is obviously a type of *dhulm*, that is not the proper complete understanding of the word *dhulm*. To avoid that misunderstanding, it has been translated in a much more general sense here as "wrongdoing" instead of "oppression," while oppression is simply one form of *dhulm*.

[3] Cf., Naadhim Sultaan, *al-Dhulm Dhulumaat Yaum al-Qiyaamah* (al-Dammam, Saudi Arabia: Daar ibn al-Qayyim, 1413 A.H.), pp. 9-10.

A Second Way of Categorizing *Dhulm*

Another important way of categorizing *dhulm* is into the following three divisions, as done by al-Hakeemi:[1]

(1) The *dhulm* that is not forgiven by Allah (unless one repents), which is *shirk* described above. Allah has said about such *shirk*,

إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَغۡفِرُ أَن يُشۡرَكَ بِهِۦ وَيَغۡفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَٰلِكَ لِمَن يَشَآءُۚ وَمَن يُشۡرِكۡ
بِٱللَّهِ فَقَدِ ٱفۡتَرَىٰٓ إِثۡمًا عَظِيمًا

“Verily, Allah forgives not that partners should be set up with Him, but He forgives whatever is less than that for whom He wills. And whoever associates partners with Allah has indeed invented a tremendous sin” (*al-Nisaa* 48).

(2) *Dhulm* that will not be overlooked until it is reconciled in either this life or the next, and that is the wrongdoing toward other humans. This kind of wrongdoing cannot be left without it being resolved— either by forgiveness from the wronged person or punishment in this life or the Hereafter. Allah has said,

وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِظَلَّٰمٖ لِّلۡعَبِيدِ

“And your Lord is not at all unjust to [His] slaves” (*Fussilat* 46). If someone does wrong to another person, it cannot be left unresolved, not forgiven or unpunished. Indeed, the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated,

مَنْ كَانَتْ لَهُ مَظْلَمَةٌ لأَخِيهِ مِنْ عِرْضِهِ أَوْ شَيْءٍ فَلْيَتَحَلَّلْهُ مِنْهُ الْيَوْمَ قَبْلَ أَنْ لا يَكُونَ
دِينَارٌ وَلا دِرْهَمٌ إِنْ كَانَ لَهُ عَمَلٌ صَالِحٌ أُخِذَ مِنْهُ بِقَدْرِ مَظْلَمَتِهِ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ حَسَنَاتٌ
أُخِذَ مِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ صَاحِبِهِ فَحُمِلَ عَلَيْهِ

“Whoever has wronged another concerning his reputation or anything else should beg him to forgive him before the Day of Resurrection when there will be no money [to compensate for wrong deeds], but, if he has good deeds, those good deeds will be taken from him according to the wrong he has done. And if he has no good deeds, the sins of the oppressed person will be loaded on him.” (Recorded by al-Bukhari.)

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[1] Muhammad al-Hakeemi, *Al-Dhulm wa Atharahu al-Sayyi* (Jeddah: Daar al-Mujtama, 1995), pp. 21-22. Ibn Taimiya makes the same distinctions and says that such has been recorded from the early scholars. Cf., Ibn Taimiya, *Majmoo*, vol. 18, p. 161. It seems ibn Taimiya was either unaware of the hadith to be quoted in the text above, “There are three types of *dhulm*…” or he must have considered it a weak hadith.

In another hadith, also from *Sahih al-Bukhari*, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

إِذَا خَلَصَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ مِنَ النَّارِ حُبِسُوا بِقَنْطَرَةٍ بَيْنَ الْجَنَّةِ وَالنَّارِ فَيَتَقَاصُّونَ مَظَالِمَ كَانَتْ
بَيْنَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا حَتَّى إِذَا نُقُّوا وَهُذِّبُوا أُذِنَ لَهُمْ بِدُخُولِ الْجَنَّةِ

"When the believers pass safely over (the bridge across) Hell, they will be stopped at an arched bridge in between Hell and Paradise where they will retaliate upon each other for the injustices done among them in the world. When they are then purified of all their sins, they will be admitted into Paradise."

(3) *Dhulm* that Allah may either overlook or punish one for. These are the sins, other than associating partners with Allah, which a person commits and which only affect himself.

These three categories of *dhulm* are explicitly mentioned in the following hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him),

الظُّلْمُ ثَلاثَةٌ فَظُلْمٌ لا يَتْرُكُهُ اللَّهُ وَظُلْمٌ يُغْفَرُ وَظُلْمٌ لا يُغْفَرُ فَأَمَّا الظُّلْمُ
الَّذِي لا يُغْفَرُ فَالشِّرْكُ لا يَغْفِرُهُ اللَّهُ وَأَمَّا الظُّلْمُ الَّذِي يُغْفَرُ فَظُلْمُ الْعَبْدِ
فِيمَا بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ رَبِّهِ وَأَمَّا الَّذِي لا يُتْرَكُ فَقَصٌّ اللَّهِ بَعْضَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْضٍ

"There are three types of *dhulm*: a type of *dhulm* that Allah does not leave, a type of *dhulm* that can be forgiven and a type of *dhulm* that is not forgiven. The *dhulm* that is not forgiven is *shirk* that Allah does not forgive. The *dhulm* that is forgiven is what is between a person and his Lord. And the *dhulm* that is not left is the *dhulm* between the servants [humans]. Allah gives them retribution from one another."[1]

The Importance of Avoiding *Dhulm* and Being *Adl* (Just, Righteous)

This *qudsi* hadith is just one of many texts that demonstrate the importance of avoiding any form of *dhulm* and, hence, being characterized by its opposite of *adl* or justice.[2] Allah also says in the Quran,

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[1] This hadith was recorded by Abu Dawood al-Tayaalisi in his *Musnad* and by Abu Nuaim in *al-Hilyah*. Although there is some problem with the chain, al-Albaani concludes that it is *hasan* based on supporting evidence. See al-Albaani, *Silsilat al-Ahadeeth al-Saheeha*, vol. 3, pp. 560-561.

[2] For a discussion of the necessity of a believer being *adl*, see Mahmood al-Khizindaar, *Hadhihi Akhlaaquna Heena Nakoona Mumineen Haqqan* (Riyadh: Daar Taibah, 1997), pp. 231-239.

إِنَّهُۥ لَا يُفۡلِحُ ٱلظَّٰلِمُونَ

"Verily, the people who commit *dhulm* will never be successful" (*al-Anaam* 21).

Dhulm is something that is hated by Allah. Another verse states,

وَٱللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ

"And Allah does not like those who commit *dhulm"* (*ali-Imraan* 57).

The one who commits *dhulm* must realize that Allah is not unaware of what he is doing. Allah will take him to task even though Allah may be giving him some respite at the present moment. Allah has stated in the Quran,

وَلَا تَحۡسَبَنَّ ٱللَّهَ غَٰفِلًا عَمَّا يَعۡمَلُ ٱلظَّٰلِمُونَۚ إِنَّمَا يُؤَخِّرُهُمۡ لِيَوۡمٖ تَشۡخَصُ فِيهِ ٱلۡأَبۡصَٰرُ

"Consider not that Allah is unaware of that which those who commit *dhulm* do, but He gives them respite up to a Day when the eyes will stare in horror..." (*Ibraaheem* 42).

One of the reasons that a people are destroyed by Allah is the *dhulm* that they commit. Allah has said,

وَتِلۡكَ ٱلۡقُرَىٰٓ أَهۡلَكۡنَٰهُمۡ لَمَّا ظَلَمُواْ

"And these towns [of Ad and Thamud] We destroyed when they did wrong (*dhalamoo*)" (*al-Kahf* 59).[1]

There are also numerous hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) that condemn and censure *dhulm*. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

اتَّقُوا الظُّلْمَ فَإِنَّ الظُّلْمَ ظُلُمَاتٌ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

"Beware of *dhulm*, for *dhulm* is darkness on the Day of Resurrection." (Recorded by Muslim. Al-Bukhari has it without, "Beware of *dhulm*.") Another hadith states,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَيُمْلِي لِلظَّالِمِ حَتَّى إِذَا أَخَذَهُ لَمْ يُفْلِتْهُ قَالَ ثُمَّ قَرَأَ (وَكَذَلِكَ أَخْذُ رَبِّكَ إِذَا أَخَذَ الْقُرَى وَهِيَ ظَالِمَةٌ إِنَّ أَخْذَهُ أَلِيمٌ شَدِيدٌ)

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[1] Also see *al-Naml* 52.

"Allah gives respite to one who commits *dhulm* but when He seizes him, He never releases him." Then the Prophet (peace be upon him) recited the verse, "Such is the seizing of your Lord when He seizes the [population of] towns. Verily, His seizing is painful and severe" (*Hud* 102). (Recorded by al-Bukhari.)

The one who commits *dhulm* must be especially fearful when he realizes that the supplication of the one he is wronging will be responded to by Allah, even if that wronged person were an unbeliever. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said,

اتَّقُوا دَعْوَةَ الْمَظْلُومِ وَإِنْ كَانَ كَافِرًا فَإِنَّهُ لَيْسَ دُونَهَا حِجَابٌ

"Protect yourself from the supplication of the one who is wronged, even if he be a disbeliever, for there is no barrier for it [between it and Allah]."[1]

On the other hand, Allah praises the opposite of *dhulm*, which is the characteristic of justice and integrity. Allah has ordered this characteristic in the verse,

إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِٱلْعَدْلِ

"Verily, Allah enjoins *adl* (justice)" (*al-Nahl* 90).[2]

There are numerous hadith that also stress the importance of *adl*. In a hadith in *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*, the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated that a just ruler will be shaded by Allah's shade on a day during which there will be no shade but His. The Prophet (peace be upon him) also stated that among the things that will save a person is that he is just while angry or pleased.[3] The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) also said,

إِنَّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَلَى مَنَابِرَ مِنْ نُورٍ عَنْ يَمِينِ الرَّحْمَنِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَكِلْتَا يَدَيْهِ يَمِينٌ
الَّذِينَ يَعْدِلُونَ فِي حُكْمِهِمْ وَأَهْلِيهِمْ وَمَا وَلُوا

"The just will be with Allah on pulpits of light on the right-hand of the Merciful— and both of His hands are right. Those are the ones who are just in their rulings, with their families and whatever they are in charge of." (Recorded by Muslim.)

One of the characteristics that must distinguish the true believers from all others is their justice even with respect to people they hate. Their hatred for a people does not allow them to swerve from justice in any way. Allah has stated in the Quran,

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[1] Recorded by Ahmad. According to al-Albaani, it is *hasan*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 1, p. 84.

[2] As noted earlier, the greatest form of justice and its foundation is *tauheed*.

[3] Recorded by al-Bazzaar and others. According to al-Albaani, it is *hasan*. See al-Albaani, *Silsilat al-Ahaadeeth al-Saheeha*, vol. 4, p. 412.

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ كُونُوا۟ قَوَّٰمِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَآءَ بِٱلْقِسْطِ ۖ وَلَا
يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَـَٔانُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰٓ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا۟ ۚ ٱعْدِلُوا۟ هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ ۖ
وَٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ خَبِيرٌۢ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

“O believers! Stand firmly for Allah as just witnesses; and let not enmity and hatred of others make you swerve from justice. Be just: that is nearer to piety; and fear Allah. Verily, Allah is well-acquainted with what you do” (*al-Maaidah* 8).[1]

How to Keep Oneself from Committing*Dhulm*

In the Quran, Allah has described mankind as apt to committing a great deal of *dhulm* to itself and others. For example, Allah has said,

وَإِن تَعُدُّوا۟ نِعْمَتَ ٱللَّهِ لَا تُحْصُوهَآ ۗ

“If you count the blessings of Allah, never will you be able to count them. Verily, man is indeed an extreme wrongdoer, an extreme ingrate” (*Ibraaheem* 34).[2] This gives the impression that it is easy for man, given his nature, to commit *dhulm* and he is prone to committing *dhulm* often. When a Muslim realizes this fact and he also realizes how dangerous *dhulm* is to his religion and well-being, he will seek the means that will help him avoid *dhulm* as much as possible.

Sultaan mentions the following means that may help a person in preventing himself from committing. First, the person must develop *taqwa* within himself. *Taqwa* will help the person remain away from *dhulm* as *dhulm* is an act that is very displeasing to Allah and He has forbidden it. Second, the person should try to develop humility within himself. Sultaan mentions this point because he says that humility is the opposite of pride and arrogance, which are two of the factors that lead many people to commit *dhulm.* Third, the person should try to free himself from any feeling of *hasad* (envy) because *hasad* is also a major cause behind much *dhulm.* Fourth, the person should read about the great reward for being just and righteous (the opposite of *dhulm*) and how pleasing that is to Allah. In other words, he should read those verses and hadith, some of which were mentioned above, that will incite him to take on those praiseworthy characteristics. Fifth, he should turn to Allah and pray for guidance and help in purifying his soul of this great evil.

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[1] This is a teaching that needs to be revived among Muslims. It seems that many Muslims consider the world to be the Muslims against everyone else. Therefore, they do not hesitate to cheat, lie or do other acts of injustice on behalf of other Muslims against non-Muslims. However, this is not proper behavior. Even while hating disbelievers and disbelief, one must still be just and fair. One must be as just toward the disbelievers as he is toward the Muslims. He is ordered and commanded to be just even if this should favor a disbeliever over his brother Muslim.

[2] Also note *al-Ahzaab* 72.

Sixth, the person should think about and take seriously the evil results of committing *dhulm.* He should realize that no real success or prosperity will ever come to those who are *dhaalimeen* (wrongdoers). He should reflect upon Allah's words,

إِنَّهُۥ لَا يُفْلِحُ ٱلظَّٰلِمُونَ

"Certainly, the wrongdoers will not be successful" (*al-Anaam* 135). He should reflect upon the fact that committing *dhulm* may keep one from getting guided by Allah. In his prayers, while reciting *surah al-Faatiha*, he may ask Allah to guide him to the straight path but he may not be so guided because of his acts of *dhulm* which are a barrier to his complete guidance. Allah says,

وَٱللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِى ٱلْقَوْمَ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ

"Allah does not guide the wrongdoing folk (*al-dhaalimeen*)" (*al-Tauba* 19). He should also consider the punishment for the wrongdoers as was mentioned in verses and hadith quoted earlier. He should recall that the punishment for the wrongdoers is not just in the next life but, one way or another, they will receive some punishment in this life. Allah says,

وَإِنَّ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا۟ عَذَابًا دُونَ ذَٰلِكَ وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

"And verily, for those who do wrong (ظلموا), there is another punishment (that is, the torment in this world and in their graves) before this, but most of them know not" (*al-Toor* 47). In the Hereafter, he will have no friend or supporter to help him, as Allah states in *ali-Imraan* 192 and *Ghaafir* 18.[1]

A Muslim's Attitude Toward*Dhulm*

First, the believer should dislike the wrongdoer for the *dhulm* he is committing. He should dislike him because Allah dislikes him. Allah says,

إِنَّهُۥ لَا يُحِبُّ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ

"He [Allah] does not like the wrongdoers" (*al-Shoora* 40).

Second, the Muslim must oppose the wrongdoer. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

إِنَّ النَّاسَ إِذَا رَأَوُا الظَّالِمَ فَلَمْ يَأْخُذُوا عَلَى يَدَيْهِ أَوْشَكَ أَنْ يَعُمَّهُمُ اللَّهُ بِعِقَابٍ مِنْهُ

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[1] Cf., Sultaan, *al-Dhulm*, pp. 25-40.

"If the people see a wrongdoer and they do not take him by his hand [to stop him], then soon Allah may inflict them all with a punishment from Him."[1]

Third, it is an obligation upon the Muslim to help both his brother the wrongdoer and his brother the wronged. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

انْصُرْ أَخَاكَ ظَالِمًا أَوْ مَظْلُومًا

"Help your brother whether he be the wrongdoer or the one who is wronged." The Companions responded to the Prophet (peace be upon him) by saying that they knew how to help the wronged person but, given Islam's opposition to *dhulm*, they asked him how they are supposed to help the wrongdoer. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) replied,

تَمْنَعُهُ مِنَ الظُّلْمِ فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ نَصْرُهُ

"Prevent him from commiting *dhulm*, and that is helping him [in the true sense]." (Recorded by al-Bukhari.)

Fourth, when a person himself is being wronged, he has the right to redress the wrong by going through the proper judicial procedures. If he is being attacked or someone is trying to steal his wealth or kill him, he has the right to defend himself. If while trying to defend himself, he ends up being killed, he will be rewarded as a martyr. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

مَنْ قُتِلَ دُونَ مَالِهِ فَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ وَمَنْ قُتِلَ دُونَ دِينِهِ فَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ وَمَنْ قُتِلَ دُونَ دَمِهِ فَهُوَ
شَهِيدٌ وَمَنْ قُتِلَ دُونَ أَهْلِهِ فَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ

"Whoever is killed defending his wealth is a martyr. Whoever is killed defending his religion is a martyr. Whoever is killed defending his life is a martyr. Whoever is killed defending his family is a martyr."[2]

"Therefore, do not wrong one another."

According to al-Sabbaagh, this portion of the hadith is meant to emphasize what precedes it. The first part prohibits *dhulm* in general while this portion orders humans not to commit *dhulm* toward one another. This is because, he says, it is man's nature to be apt to wrong others if there is nothing preventing him from doing so. Hence, Allah has stated this to further restrain humans from committing acts of wrong toward one another. A person is not allowed to wrong himself, nor is he allowed to answer a wrong with another wrong.[1]

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[1] Recorded by al-Tirmidhi, Abu Dawood and others. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 1, p. 398.

[2] Recorded by Ahmad, al-Tirmidhi and others. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 1100.

Some of the common forms of *dhulm* that people commit toward one another are cheating in business transactions, denying one's debt to another, backbiting, killing one another and so forth. All of these are acts that a Muslim must do his best to avoid for Allah has strictly forbidden them.[2]

"O My servants, all of you are lost except for those whom I have guided."

This passage and the remainder of this hadith demonstrate that all of creation is in need of Allah to bring about good and to ward off evil. This is true with respect to both worldly and Hereafter matters. In reality, humans do not possess any power or ability to benefit themselves, unless Allah, in His grace, wills such. If a person is devoid of guidance and sustenance, he will lose this life. If a person is not graced by Allah with forgiveness for his sins, his sins will destroy him in the Hereafter.

Allah says in the Quran, for example,

مَن يَهْدِ ٱللَّهُ فَهُوَ ٱلْمُهْتَدِ ۖ وَمَن يُضْلِلْ فَلَن تَجِدَ لَهُۥ وَلِيًّا مُّرْشِدًا

"He whom Allah guides, he is the rightly guided. But for him whom He sends astray you will find no guiding friend to lead him [to the Straight Path]" (*al-Kahf* 17).

No individual can bring about his own benefit. Instead, he must turn to Allah and beseech Allah for his own good. Ibn Taimiya points out that good and harm may be related to one's worldly life or one's religion. Guidance and forgiveness mentioned in this hadith are related to one's religion. Food and clothing are related to one's worldly needs.[3]

The points mentioned in this hadith are some of the keys in distinguishing who has the right to be worshipped from these false gods that are worshipped. The Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) made many of the same arguments mentioned in this hadith to negate the worship of anything other than Allah. Note the following verses of the Quran,

قَالَ أَفَرَءَيْتُم مَّا كُنتُمْ تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾ أَنتُمْ وَءَابَآؤُكُمُ ٱلْأَقْدَمُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾ فَإِنَّهُمْ
عَدُوٌّ لِّىٓ إِلَّا رَبَّ ٱلْعَـٰلَمِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾ ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَنِى فَهُوَ يَهْدِينِ ﴿٧٨﴾ وَٱلَّذِى هُوَ

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[1] Al-Sabbaagh, pp. 93-94.

[2] Cf., ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 3, pp. 140-145.

[3] Ibn Taimiya, *Majmoo*, vol. 18, p. 171.

يُطْعِمُنِى وَيَسْقِينِ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَإِذَا مَرِضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِينِ ﴿٨٠﴾ وَٱلَّذِى يُمِيتُنِى
ثُمَّ يُحْيِينِ ﴿٨١﴾ وَٱلَّذِىٓ أَطْمَعُ أَن يَغْفِرَ لِى خَطِيٓـَٔتِى يَوْمَ ٱلدِّينِ ﴿٨٢﴾ رَبِّ
هَبْ لِى حُكْمًا وَأَلْحِقْنِى بِٱلصَّـٰلِحِينَ

"He [Abraham] said, 'Do you observe that which you have been worshipping, you and your ancient fathers? Verily, they are all enemies to me, save the Lord of the Worlds, who has created me, and it is He who guides me. And it is He who feeds me and gives me to drink. And when I am ill, it is He who cures me. And it is He Who will cause me to die, and then will bring me to life [again]. And who, I hope, will forgive my faults on the Day of Recompense. My Lord! Bestow right judgment upon me and join me with the righteous'" (*al-Shuaraa* 75-83). Obviously, the One who alone creates, gives guidance, gives sustenance, gives life and brings about death in this world and can forgive in the Hereafter is the only one who is worthy of worship and being submitted to. These essential characteristics of Godhood have been aptly stated in this *qudsi* hadith and in the above passage from the Quran.

When one considers that Allah grants all that He does out of mercy to His servants and with no benefit to Himself whatsoever, as shall also be noted in this hadith, he will realize that God is most deserving of worship and gratitude. This fact should make the servant even more fervent in his worship of Allah.

"All of You Are Lost (*Dhaal*)": The Meaning of *al-Dhalaal* (الضلال)

This hadith states that all of mankind is "lost, astray". The word *dhilaal* implies any kind of straying from the Straight Path. It is the opposite of guidance. It includes an intentional straying as well as a mistaken straying. It includes the one who does not know the truth as well as the one who rejects the truth. It also includes a small straying as well as a large straying. Even when one is following the Straight Path, one may perform many acts that are not consistent with that Straight Path and are acts of *dhilaal*. Hence, one must always turn to Allah to help him follow and be as perfect as possible along the Straight Path.

According to al-Teebi, because *dhilaal* refers to any kind of straying from the Straight Path, it includes what is done either intentionally or unintentionally. For that reason, it may even be used in describing the mistakes of the Prophets as well as the misguidance of the unbelievers— although there is actually a big difference between the two forms of straying. For example, Allah says about the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him),

وَوَجَدَكَ ضَآلًّا فَهَدَىٰ

"And He found you [O Muhammad] unaware (*dhaal*) [of the laws of the Straight Path] and He guided you" (*al-Dhuha* 7). Similarly, Moses (peace be upon him) stated about himself,

قَالَ فَعَلْتُهَآ إِذًا وَأَنَا۠ مِنَ ٱلضَّآلِّينَ

"He [Moses] said, 'I did it then when I was of the ignorant (*dhaaleen*).'" (*al-Shuaraa* 20).[1]

Some may argue that this passage contradicts another *qudsi* hadith in which Allah says,

إِنِّي خَلَقْتُ عِبَادِي حُنَفَاءَ كُلَّهُمْ وَإِنَّهُمْ أَتَتْهُمُ الشَّيَاطِينُ فَاجْتَالَتْهُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِمْ

"I created all of My slaves with sincere devotion to One God alone. But the devils came to them and drew them away from their religion." (Recorded by Muslim.) One might also argue that this hadith contradicts another hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him),

مَا مِنْ مَوْلُودٍ إِلاَّ يُولَدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ فَأَبَوَاهُ يُهَوِّدَانِهِ أَوْ يُنَصِّرَانِهِ أَوْ يُمَجِّسَانِهِ

"No child is born except that he is born on the natural disposition [of Islam] and then his parents turn him into a Jew, Christian or Magian." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

Ibn Rajab and al-Haitami show that there is no contradiction between these two hadith. Allah created humans with the natural inclination to accept Islam and to worship only Allah. Hence, they are ready and they have the potential to be true Muslims. However, the human is still in need of actually learning what Islam is. For when a person is born, he is born ignorant, unaware of the details of the truth. As Allah has said,

وَٱللَّهُ أَخْرَجَكُم مِّنۢ بُطُونِ أُمَّهَـٰتِكُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ شَيْـًٔا

"And Allah has brought you out from the wombs of your mothers while you know nothing" (*al-Nahl* 78).[2]

When the person is exposed to the true guidance from Allah, he then must choose to follow that guidance which is consistent with his nature or reject it. However, until he is exposed to that guidance, he is ignorant of it and, therefore, he is *dhaal* since one cannot follow a path that he is ignorant of. This is the implication of this *qudsi* hadith.

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[1] Al-Teebi, vol. 6, pp. 1837-1838.

[2] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, pp. 39-40; al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 194.

Man is Not Guided Unless Allah Guides Him

The greatest blessing that Allah bestows upon mankind is the blessing of guidance. Perhaps, al-Haitami states, this is why Allah has mentioned this aspect first in this *qudsi* hadith.[1] Faith or following guidance is not a favor that mankind does toward God or to the Prophet (peace be upon him); it is a favor bestowed by God upon humans. Allah says in the Quran,

يَمُنُّونَ عَلَيْكَ أَنْ أَسْلَمُوا۟ ۖ قُل لَّا تَمُنُّوا۟ عَلَىَّ إِسْلَٰمَكُم ۖ بَلِ ٱللَّهُ يَمُنُّ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ

هَدَىٰكُمْ لِلْإِيمَٰنِ إِن كُنتُمْ صَٰدِقِينَ

"They regard as a favor to you [O Muhammad] that they have embraced Islam. Say: Count not your Islam as a favor to me. Nay, but Allah has conferred a favor upon you that He has guided you to the Faith, if you indeed are true" (*al-Hujuraat* 17).

Different Types of Guidance

In *Madaaraj al-Saalikeen*, ibn al-Qayyim discusses ten different levels or types of guidance that Allah gives.[2] However, his discussion is too detailed for the purposes here. Instead, al-Raaghib al-Isfahaani's and ibn Taimiya's discussion will be followed.[3] They divided Allah's guidance for mankind into virtually the same four categories:

(1) The first type of guidance is that which is needed for welfare in this worldly life. This type of guidance is given, in general, to all humans, whether believers or not. This includes the natural disposition that people have at birth to pursue what benefits them and refrain from what harms them. It also includes the guidance given to the young infant who, for example, knows how to suckle at his mother's breast. Moses said in response to being asked who was his Lord,

قَالَ رَبُّنَا ٱلَّذِىٓ أَعْطَىٰ كُلَّ شَىْءٍ خَلْقَهُۥ ثُمَّ هَدَىٰ

"He said, 'My Lord is He who gave to each thing its form and nature, then guided it aright'" (*Taha* 50). Al-Isfahaani points out that if a person does not have this type of guidance, which includes mental capacity, then he will not have the other types of guidance. In fact, he will not be held responsible for his actions in this life.

(2) The second type of guidance is showing mankind what benefits them in a religious sense and, thus, concerning the Hereafter. For this purpose,

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[1] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 194.

[2] Ibn al-Qayyim, *Madaarij*, vol. 1, pp. 37-51.

[3] Cf., al-Isfahaani, pp. 539ff; ibn Taimiya, *Majmoo*, vol. 18, pp. 171-175.

clear signs have been shown, messengers have been sent and books have been revealed. This type of guidance is also offered to all of mankind, believers and disbelievers— the believers, of course, accept the guidance while the unbelievers do not. For example, Allah says about the people of Thamood,

وَأَمَّا ثَمُودُ فَهَدَيْنَٰهُمْ فَٱسْتَحَبُّوا۟ ٱلْعَمَىٰ عَلَى ٱلْهُدَىٰ

"And as for Thamood, We showed and made clear to them the Path of Truth, but they preferred blindness to guidance" (*Fussilat* 17). This type of guidance may be "attributed" to the Quran, the prophets or anyone who shows another what the Straight Path is.

(3) The third type of guidance is in reference to the placing of faith and guidance in the heart of the individual. This is something that can only be done by Allah, as mentioned in the commentary on al-Nawawi's introduction. This type of guidance is referred to in numerous places in the Quran. For example, Allah says in a verse recently quoted,

مَن يَهْدِ ٱللَّهُ فَهُوَ ٱلْمُهْتَدِ ۖ وَمَن يُضْلِلْ فَلَن تَجِدَ لَهُۥ وَلِيًّا مُّرْشِدًا

"He whom Allah guides, he is the rightly guided. But for him whom He sends astray you will find no guiding friend to lead him [to the Straight Path]" (*al-Kahf* 17).

(4) The fourth type of guidance is the guidance in the Hereafter or the guidance to the path to Paradise. Allah says in the Quran,

إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَعَمِلُوا۟ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ يَهْدِيهِمْ رَبُّهُم بِإِيمَٰنِهِمْ ۖ تَجْرِى
مِن تَحْتِهِمُ ٱلْأَنْهَٰرُ فِى جَنَّٰتِ ٱلنَّعِيمِ

"Verily, those who believe and do deeds of righteousness, their Lord will guide them through their faith, under them will flow rivers in the Gardens of Delight" (*Yoonus* 9).

The last type of guidance is the result of following the second type of guidance, which can only be followed if one has been granted the blessing of the third type of guidance.

Note that of the different types of guidance, three of them come only from Allah. That is, others may show the straight path and try to convince others to follow it but the other types of guidance are solely from Allah alone. Therefore, any individual who has been blessed by Allah to achieve those different types of guidance must be very thankful to Allah for that great blessing.

In fact, even the other category of guidance originates with Allah as He is the one who revealed the true guidance, like the Quran. Without that revelation and Allah's sending of messengers, that type of guidance would also be unknown to humans. Hence, Allah must be praised and thanked for every type and aspect of guidance that there is in this world.

It seems, and Allah knows best, that the type of guidance that is referred to in this hadith is the third type of guidance. This is the type of guidance that truly distinguishes the one who is guided from the one who is straying. Everyone may possess or have access to the first and second types of guidance but that does not keep them from being among those who are astray.

"Therefore, seek guidance from Me and I will guide you."

Allah says in the Quran,

إِنَّكَ لَا تَهۡدِى مَنۡ أَحۡبَبۡتَ وَلَٰكِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَهۡدِى مَن يَشَآءُۚ وَهُوَ أَعۡلَمُ بِٱلۡمُهۡتَدِينَ

"Verily, you [O Muhammad] guide not whom you like, but Allah guides whom He wills. And He knows best those who are guided" (*al-Qasas* 56).

Everyone must seek guidance from Allah for He is the only true source of guidance. One has to pray to Him and Him alone for guidance. If a person sincerely seeks true guidance from Allah and beseeches Him, Allah will guide him to the straight path, as shown in this hadith.[1]

Some people claim that they turn to God for guidance and yet they are not guided to Islam, the true guidance. The only way, based on this hadith, that this could happen is if they did not want the true guidance. Yes, they prayed but not with the sincere intention to follow the true guidance, regardless of whether that true guidance goes against their desires, wishes and ego. Instead, they prayed for "guidance" but they had already determined what that "guidance" was. They had their heart set on some specific path and that is what they were going to follow. In other words, they did not sincerely and purely pray to God to guide them to the Straight Path. Their hearts were not pure to accept the truth. Hence, they were not guided to the Straight Path of Islam.

This turning to Allah for guidance includes the second and third types of guidance mentioned above. Ibn Rajab states that a person must beseech Allah for the general guidance of having faith placed into his heart. However, a person must also pray to Allah for guidance regarding the detailed actions of his day to day life. He must know what is correct and what deeds to follow in every moment of his life. For this reason, he has been instructed to pray in every prayer,

ٱهۡدِنَا ٱلصِّرَٰطَ ٱلۡمُسۡتَقِيمَ

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[1] Cf., ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 3, p. 149.

"Guide us to the Straight Path" (*al-Faatiha* 6).[1] Furthermore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to make the following supplication as he began his late-night prayers,

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ جَبْرَائِيلَ وَمِيكَائِيلَ وَإِسْرَافِيلَ فَاطِرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ عَالِمَ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ
أَنْتَ تَحْكُمُ بَيْنَ عِبَادِكَ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ اهْدِنِي لِمَا اخْتُلِفَ فِيهِ مِنَ الْحَقِّ بِإِذْنِكَ
إِنَّكَ تَهْدِي مَنْ تَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

"O Allah, Lord of Gabriel, Michael and Israafeel, Originator of the Heavens the Earth, Knower of the Unseen and Seen, You judge between Your servants concerning what they differed about, so guide me to the truth in the matters concerning which they differ, by Your permission. You guide whomever You will to the Straight Path." (Recorded by Muslim.)[2]

A Refutation of Some Heretical Views

The Qadariyyah, a heretical sect that developed in the history of Islam who deny the reality of *qadar*, claim that the human by himself attains guidance. According to them, the only aspect of guidance coming from Allah is the sending of messengers and revealing of books. Beyond that, Allah plays no role in the guiding of mankind. There is no aspect of Divine Grace that leads mankind to faith. According to this argument, Allah does not bless the believer by giving guidance any more than He blesses an unbeliever. This claim of theirs is false and contradicts the Quran and sunnah.[3] A person cannot attain guidance on his own. Only by the grace of Allah can one attain guidance, as this hadith clearly demonstrates. Hence, the individual must turn to Allah and sincerely beseech Him if he truly wishes to be guided.

According to the Mutazilah, another heretical sect that developed in the history of Islam, Allah willed or wanted all of mankind to follow the right guidance but much of mankind refused to do so. This belief is incorrect and is refuted by this hadith. Instead, Allah guides whom He wills. According to His Wisdom and Knowledge, He has decreed to guide some of mankind while allowing the rest to stray. This is according to His will and decree and not against it. If He had willed to guide all of mankind, He would have done so.[1]

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[1] Ibn Uthaimeen points out that when most people recite this verse in their prayers, their hearts are not attuned to what they are saying and, therefore, they get no response from Allah to this prayer. Cf., Ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 3, p. 149. A Christian missionary was once trying to use this verse as an argument that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the Muslims know that they are misguided. Therefore, they pray for guidance. This is typical of the false claims used by the enemies of Islam. Sincere Christians will have to agree that a person needs guidance in every moment of his life.

[2] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 40. Ibn Rajab and al-Haitami also point out that after one who sneezes is responded to, he should say, "May Allah guide you." Then they state that some of the jurists of Iraq reject this practice as they argue that a believer is not in need of a prayer for guidance. The majority of the scholars differ from them and follow what is stated in the sunnah. Cf., ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 40; al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 194. If what they state from some of the jurists of Iraq is true, it demonstrates a lack of a complete understanding of the concept of guidance. Allah knows best.

[3] Ibn Taimiya, *Majmoo*, vol. 18, pp. 173-4.

> “O My servants, all of you are hungry except for those whom I have fed. Therefore, seek food from Me and I will feed you.”

After mentioning the “food of the soul” (guidance), Allah mentions the food that is needed for the physical body. Food is one of the greatest blessings man can have. Without it, he cannot survive. Eating can also be a pleasing experience. In addition, proper nutrition is needed for the human being to be able to think and develop in a proper manner.

Allah makes it clear that it is by His will that humans have food, water and fire or energy. Allah says in the Quran,

أَفَرَءَيْتُم مَّا تَحْرُثُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾ ءَأَنتُمْ تَزْرَعُونَهُۥٓ أَمْ نَحْنُ ٱلزَّٰرِعُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾ لَوْ
نَشَآءُ لَجَعَلْنَٰهُ حُطَٰمًا فَظَلْتُمْ تَفَكَّهُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾ إِنَّا لَمُغْرَمُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾ بَلْ نَحْنُ
مَحْرُومُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾ أَفَرَءَيْتُمُ ٱلْمَآءَ ٱلَّذِى تَشْرَبُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾ ءَأَنتُمْ أَنزَلْتُمُوهُ مِنَ ٱلْمُزْنِ
أَمْ نَحْنُ ٱلْمُنزِلُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾ لَوْ نَشَآءُ جَعَلْنَٰهُ أُجَاجًا فَلَوْلَا تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾
أَفَرَءَيْتُمُ ٱلنَّارَ ٱلَّتِى تُورُونَ ﴿٧١﴾ ءَأَنتُمْ أَنشَأْتُمْ شَجَرَتَهَآ أَمْ نَحْنُ
ٱلْمُنشِـُٔونَ

“Then tell Me about the seed you sow in the ground. Is it you that makes it grow or are We the Grower? Were it Our will, we could crumble it to dry pieces, and you would be regretful. [Saying,] ‘We are indeed ruined. Nay, but we are deprived.’ Then tell Me about the water you drink. Is it you who causes it to come down from the rain clouds or are We the Ones who cause it to come down? If We willed, We verily could make it salt [and undrinkable]. Why then do you not give thanks [to Allah]? Then tell Me about the fire which you kindle. Is it you who made the tree thereof to grow, or are We the grower?” (*al-Waaqiah* 63-72).[2]

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[1] Al-Nawawi, *Sharh Saheeh*, vol. 16, pp. 131-132.

[2] Even atheists have to admit that they have no control over the laws of nature; they can simply try to use the given laws to their advantage. Who then makes those “laws of nature” and makes everything in this creation work? It is Allah and Allah alone. Even with all of the advances in

According to ibn Uthaimeen, there are two ways by which food is to be sought from Allah. One way is by speech and the other is by action. As for speech, it is to ask Allah to provide and give sustenance. As for action, it has two aspects. The first aspect is the performance of pious deeds. This is one of the greatest causes that bring about sustenance from Allah. Allah says in the Quran,

وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ ٱلْقُرَىٰٓ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَٱتَّقَوْا۟ لَفَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم بَرَكَـٰتٍ مِّنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ
وَٱلْأَرْضِ وَلَـٰكِن كَذَّبُوا۟ فَأَخَذْنَـٰهُم بِمَا كَانُوا۟ يَكْسِبُونَ

"And if the people of the towns had believed and had piety, certainly, We would have opened for them blessings from the heaven and the earth. But they belied [the Messengers], so We took them [to punishment] for what they used to earn" (*al-Araaf* 96; also see *al-Maaidah* 65-66).

The second aspect related to action is to perform the outward "causes" that lead to the production of food. In other words, besides asking from Allah, one must then follow the steps that will lead to food production or to the ability to purchase food and so on. This is also part of the seeking of food from Allah as Allah requires humans to act upon the means He has shown to His creation.[1]

Ibn Uthaimeen makes one more point. He says that the seeking of sustenance from Allah requires that one have good expectations of Allah.[2] In other words, one must believe that if he seeks sustenance from Allah, Allah will provide for him. He says that it is not permissible to ask from Allah while one's heart is not in the supplication or one does not believe that it will have any effect. Similarly, he states that if one simply relies on the worldly causes and his own strength, he may be disappointed since Allah may not will them to have their intended results.[3]

According to al-Haitami, the meaning of, "I will feed you," is that Allah will make it easy for the people to get their food. For example, He will cause rain to fall in specific areas that will provide the people of that land with plentiful crops and so forth. All of this is under the control of Allah and He is the true Provider.

Ibn Daqeeq al-Eid and al-Haitami point out that this also contains a lesson for the poor and impoverished. They should not turn to anyone other

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technology, without the mercy of Allah and Allah allowing the proper growth of food and access to pure water, humans cannot bring about any food for themselves.

[1] Ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 3, p. 152.

[2] In his commentary to this hadith, ibn Taimiya stresses putting one's trust in Allah rather than simply the physical causes of this world. The discussion by ibn Uthaimeen and ibn Taimiya are somewhat parallel. Ibn Taimiya also stresses that it is not permissible to rely on the physical causes alone. Instead, one must rely upon Allah who is the "force" behind the physical causes. Cf., ibn Taimiya, *Majmoo*, vol. 18, pp. 178-185.

[3] Ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 3, p. 152.

than Allah to feed them because, in reality, they will not be provided for except by Allah.[1]

"O My servants, all of you are naked except for those whom I have clothed.
Therefore, seek clothing from Me and I will clothe you."

Another great blessing that Allah has bestowed upon mankind is that of clothing. Clothing is a protection from the weather. It is also a means by which one may cover one's private parts. And, finally, it is also an adornment.

Many people overlook this great blessing from Allah and take it for granted. Others, especially in today's world, misuse this great blessing and, instead of using clothing to cover one's private parts, use clothing as a tool of seduction and displaying one's beauty.

Humans come out of their mothers' wombs without any clothing on. They are in need of clothing to cover their physical private parts. In the same way, according to ibn Uthaimeen, they are in need of good deeds to cover their "spiritual nakedness." This type of covering is the covering of *taqwa* (fear of Allah and God-consciousness). Allah says in the Quran,

يَـٰبَنِىٓ ءَادَمَ قَدۡ أَنزَلۡنَا عَلَيۡكُمۡ لِبَاسًا يُوَٰرِى سَوۡءَٰتِكُمۡ وَرِيشًا ۖ وَلِبَاسُ
ٱلتَّقۡوَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ خَيۡرٌ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ مِنۡ ءَايَـٰتِ ٱللَّهِ لَعَلَّهُمۡ يَذَّكَّرُونَ

"O Children of Adam! We have bestowed clothing upon you to cover yourselves and as an adornment. And the covering of *taqwa* (righteousness), that is better. Such are among the signs of Allah, that they may remember" (*al-Araaf* 26). Hence, one needs a physical covering as well as a spiritual covering. Ibn Uthaimeen goes on to say that those people who interpret dreams state that if a person sees himself naked in a dream, he should seek forgiveness from Allah as that is a sign that he has a shortcoming in his *taqwa*, as *taqwa* is a covering.[2]

Ibn Uthaimeen states that seeking clothing from Allah is to be done in a fashion similar to what was stated concerning seeking food from Allah. It must be done both with statements and actions.[3]

Finally, ibn Uthaimeen discusses the tie between these three portions of this hadith concerning guidance, food and clothing. He states that food is clothing for the stomach as when one is hungry, it means that the stomach is not lined with food. He then states that clothing covers the outer body. Guidance covers the most important part of the body, the heart and soul, from the blemish of sins.[4]

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[1] Ibn Daqeeq al-Eid, *Sharh*, p. 66; al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 195.
[2] Ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 3, pp. 153-154.
[3] Ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 3, p. 155.
[4] Ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 3, p. 155.

"O My servants, you sin by night and by day, and I forgive all sins.
Therefore, seek forgiveness from Me and I will forgive you."

Besides providing guidance, food and clothing, Allah offers humanity another great bounty: the bounty of forgiveness for one's sins. This bounty is as important as the previously mentioned bounties because, as Allah states here, mankind is bound to commit sins.[1]

Daytime and nighttime means that at all times humans commit sins. Every believer should be ashamed of this fact. During the daytime, in general, his actions are witnessed by others and he should be too shy to commit sins in view of others. During the nighttime, he is not seen by anyone and this is the best time for him to perform good deeds that are free of any form of show and display. Instead, that time is often used to commit sins.

However, Allah calls out to His servants. He informs them that He forgives sins. He is, in fact, the Forgiving, the Merciful. If the sinning humans would repent to Him and seek His forgiveness, He is willing to forgive them.

All humans are prone to commit sins. However, what distinguishes some sinners from others is the admission of committing the sin, the feeling that it was wrong and the want to ask Allah for forgiveness. This was made clear by the Prophet (peace be upon him) when he said,

كُلُّ ابْنِ آدَمَ خَطَّاءٌ وَخَيْرُ الْخَطَّائِينَ التَّوَّابُونَ

"All humans are sinners. And the best sinners are those who repent much."[2]

This is an important point for the human psyche. If Allah were to refuse to accept repentance and pleas for forgiveness, then all of mankind would be doomed, because all of mankind is apt to commit sins. If they would be doomed, there would be no hope of redemption. Indeed, there would even be no need to reform and change one's sinful ways. However, Allah makes it clear that no one should ever despair of Allah's mercy and forgiveness. The door to repentance and forgiveness is always open as long as the person is still alive and the pangs of death have not reached him. Allah says,

قُلْ يَٰعِبَادِىَ ٱلَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا۟ عَلَىٰٓ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا۟ مِن رَّحْمَةِ ٱللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ
يَغْفِرُ ٱلذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا ۚ إِنَّهُۥ هُوَ ٱلْغَفُورُ ٱلرَّحِيمُ

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[1] The word أخطا (which has a four-letter root) implies that a person did something wrong, whether intentionally or unintentionally. However, الخاطئ ("the sinner"), which is from the three-letter root خطئ, implies one who does something wrong intentionally. This is the word that is being used in this hadith. See al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 195; al-Qaari, vol. 5, p. 125.

[2] Recorded by Abu Dawood, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nasaai and ibn Maajah. According to al-Hilaali, it is *sahih*. See al-Hilaali, *Eeqaadh*, p. 345. However, according to al-Arnaoot and Baajis, its chain may be considered *hasan*. See al-Arnaoot and Baajis, vol. 2, p. 41.

"Say: O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by committing sins], despair not of the Mercy of Allah. Verily, Allah forgives all sins. Truly, He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful" (*al-Zumar* 53).

No matter how great one's sins might have been, one need not despair. The door to sincere repentance and forgiveness will always be open. In *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*, the Prophet (peace be upon him) told of a person who killed one hundred people, yet because of his desire to repent, Allah showed mercy on him. In *Surah al-Burooj*, Allah tells of a people who burnt some believers alive simply because they believed in Allah. Yet Allah then says about them,

إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ فَتَنُوا۟ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَٱلْمُؤْمِنَٰتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَتُوبُوا۟ فَلَهُمْ عَذَابُ جَهَنَّمَ
وَلَهُمْ عَذَابُ ٱلْحَرِيقِ

"Verily, those who put to trial the believing men and believing women and then do not turn in repentance, they will have the torment of Hell, and they will have the punishment of the burning Fire" (*al-Burooj* 10). That punishment is awaiting them for that grievous crime only if they do not first sincerely repent. Such is the willingness of Allah to forgive and the expanse of His mercy. Even *shirk*, the greatest sin a person could commit, is forgiven by Allah once the person repents and gives up *shirk*. (However, dying upon *shirk* is not forgiven.)

The Meaning of *Ghafar* (غفر)[1]

Ghafar means to conceal something. With respect to sins, it implies concealing a sin, removing its effect and making one safe from its evil consequence. Allah does this with respect to a sin when He forgives a person.[2]

According to al-Haitami, the meaning of seeking forgiveness in this hadith is actually repenting. He states that repenting completely wipes away the sin while *al-istighfaar* (seeking forgiveness) simply lessens the evil consequence or delays the punishment for a sin. Hence, what is meant here is repentance and not simply asking for forgiveness.[3] Ibn Abu al-Izz explains the usage of the two terms, *istighfaar* and *taubah* by saying, "*Istighfaar* is sometimes mentioned by itself and sometimes along with *tawbah* (repentance). When it is mentioned alone it implies *tawbah*, just as when *tawbah* is mentioned alone it implies *istighfaar*. Each is included in the connotation of the other."[4]

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[1] The statement, for example, أستغفرالله ("I seek Allah's forgiveness") comes from this root.

[2] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 196.

[3] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 196. Ibn Taimiya was of the opinion that both *taubah* and *istighfaar* are meant in this portion of the hadith. See ibn Taimiya, *Majmoo*, vol. 18, p. 192.

[4] Ibn Abu al-Izz, vol. 2, p. 452.

Ibn Uthaimeen is in agreement with the above explanation. He states that seeking forgiveness is not simply a matter of a person saying, “O Allah, forgive me.” Instead, it must be accompanied by a sincere repentance. He then states that for the repentance to be correct, it must meet certain conditions, which are given below.[1]

The Criteria for a Sound Repentance

There are five conditions that must be met in order for an act of repentance to be considered sound and proper. These five are:[2]

(1) The act of repentance must be done solely for the sake of Allah. The person cannot repent, for example, for the sake of reputation, to be seen by others or to get closer to them. His sole intent must be a return to the proper submission to Allah. This condition of purity in one’s intention is a condition for any deed to be accepted by Allah, including the deed of repentance.

(2) The repenting person must feel remorse for the sin that he has committed. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

النَّدمُ تَوْبَةٌ

“Remorse [is the main part of] repentance.”[3] He must feel that the act that he did was wrong and he must feel very sorry about that. If a person committed a sin and he does not feel any different had he committed or not committed that sin, he does not feel remorse. Therefore, he is not repenting properly. Instead, in his heart, he should wish that he had never committed that sin.

(3) The repenting person must stop committing the sin. Allah describes those who repent with the words,

وَٱلَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا۟ فَـٰحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوٓا۟ أَنفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ فَٱسْتَغْفَرُوا۟
لِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَمَن يَغْفِرُ ٱلذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا ٱللَّهُ وَلَمْ يُصِرُّوا۟ عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلُوا۟ وَهُمْ
يَعْلَمُونَ

“And those who when they have committed illegal sexual intercourse or wronged themselves with evil remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their sins— and none can forgive sins except Allah— and do not persist in what [wrong] they have done, while they know” (*ali-Imraan* 135). The one who says he repents and continues to commit the same sin is, says ibn Uthaimeen, lying and ridiculing Allah.

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[1] Ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 3, p. 156.

[2] For the most part, the following is based on ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 3, pp. 156-161.

[3] Recorded by Ahmad and others. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 1150.

Part of repentance is to undo a wrong that someone has committed toward someone else. For example, if a person stole something from someone else, he must return the stolen property to the rightful owner, if possible. If that is not possible, the thief should give the item or a similar amount of wealth away in charity, with the intention that the reward will go to the one from whom he stole. If a person backbit another or fought with another, he must go to that person and ask that person for forgiveness.[1]

(4) The person must be determined not to repeat that sin again. If a person claims to repent but he knows that if he could get the opportunity to perform that sin again, he would do so, he has not repented properly. If, however, he should slip in the future and commit that sin again, although he desired never to do so again, this would not affect his original act of repentance. Instead, he must repent anew for the new sin that he has committed.

(5) The person must repent before it is too late. A person must repent before he starts feeling the pangs of death and knows that he is dying. Allah says in the Quran,

وَلَيْسَتِ ٱلتَّوْبَةُ لِلَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ ٱلسَّيِّـَٔاتِ حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَهُمُ ٱلْمَوْتُ
قَالَ إِنِّى تُبْتُ ٱلْـَٔـٰنَ وَلَا ٱلَّذِينَ يَمُوتُونَ وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ ۚ أُو۟لَـٰٓئِكَ أَعْتَدْنَا
لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا

"And of no effect is the repentance of those who continue to do evil deeds until death faces one of them and he says, 'Now, I repent,' nor for those who die while they are unbelievers. For them We have prepared a painful torment" (*al-Nisaa* 18).

Every sinner should do his best to turn to Allah and seek forgiveness from Allah. Allah is pleased with the repentance of His servants and is willing to forgive them. Instead of feeling complete despair for past sins, everyone should realize that the door to repentance is open. Furthermore, due to the effects of repentance and the change in one's heart in the process, one may be in a better state after repentance then he was before he committed the sin. This was the case, for example, with Adam. Adam committed a sin. He then felt remorse and his heart turned sincerely to Allah with repentance. Thereafter, his faith and belief were better than before. Allah says,

وَعَصَىٰٓ ءَادَمُ رَبَّهُۥ فَغَوَىٰ ﴿١٢١﴾ ثُمَّ ٱجْتَبَٰهُ رَبُّهُۥ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ وَهَدَىٰ

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[1] The exception to this general rule is if the person felt that by doing such, the harm would be much greater than the benefit.

"Thus did Adam disobey his Lord, so he went astray. Then his Lord chose him, and turned to him with forgiveness, and gave him guidance" (*Taha* 121-122).

> "O My servants, you will not be able to harm Me so as bring to Me any harm, and you will not able to benefit Me so as to bring Me any benefit."

Allah is not in need of any of His creation. He is self-sufficient and perfect. He is not in need of any assistant, spouse or son to assist Him or benefit Him in any way. All creatures can neither benefit nor harm Allah in any way. Allah has said,

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ ٱلْجِنَّ وَٱلْإِنسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴿٥٦﴾ مَآ أُرِيدُ مِنْهُم مِّن رِّزْقٍ وَمَآ
أُرِيدُ أَن يُطْعِمُونِ ﴿٥٧﴾ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ هُوَ ٱلرَّزَّاقُ ذُو ٱلْقُوَّةِ ٱلْمَتِينُ

"And I [Allah] created not the jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me [alone]. I seek not any provision from them nor do I ask that they should feed Me. Verily, Allah is the All-Provider, Owner of Power, the Most Strong" (*al-Dhaariyaat* 56-58). Allah also says,

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ أَنتُمُ ٱلْفُقَرَآءُ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ ۖ وَٱللَّهُ هُوَ ٱلْغَنِيُّ ٱلْحَمِيدُ

"O mankind! It is you who stand in need of Allah. But Allah is Rich [free of all needs], Worthy of all praise" (*Faatir* 15).

In numerous places in the Quran, Allah makes it clear that the unbelievers cannot harm Allah in any way. For example, Allah states,

وَلَا يَحْزُنكَ ٱلَّذِينَ يُسَٰرِعُونَ فِى ٱلْكُفْرِ ۚ إِنَّهُمْ لَن يَضُرُّوا۟ ٱللَّهَ شَيْـًٔا ۗ

"And let not those grieve you [O Muhammad] who rush with haste to unbelief; verily, not the least harm will they do to Allah" (*ali-Imraan* 176).

All of the creation belongs to Allah while He is not in need of any of it. A verse states,

وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِى ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَمَا فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ ۗ وَلَقَدْ وَصَّيْنَا ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا۟ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ مِن
قَبْلِكُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ أَنِ ٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ ۚ وَإِن تَكْفُرُوا۟ فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا فِى ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَمَا
فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ ۚ وَكَانَ ٱللَّهُ غَنِيًّا حَمِيدًا

"And to Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. And, verily, We have recommended to the people of the Scripture before you and to you [Muslims] that you (all) fear Allah. But if you disbelieve, then unto Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. And Allah is Ever Rich [Free of all wants], Worthy of all praise" (*al-Nisaa* 131).

Allah loves for His slaves to be pious and to repent. But He does not benefit from this in any way. All of this is for their own good. Similarly, He hates for His slaves to disbelieve and commit sins. However, He is not harmed by their disbelief or sins by any means. They are simply hurting themselves. It is only out of Allah's mercy, kindness and goodness to His creation that He loves what is beneficial for them and dislikes what is harmful for them. It is by His grace and mercy that He guides people to the Straight Path, while He does not benefit at all from that.

"O My servants, if the first and last of you and the human and jinn of you were as pious as the most pious heart of anyone among you, that would not add anything to My dominion. O My servants... that would not decrease anything from My dominion."

Ibn Taimiya explains that the word *mulk* ("dominion") could mean: (1) the power to administer and manage affairs, (2) the actual administering and arranging of affairs of the creation or (3) the objects (in this case, humans and jinn) of the dominion. The word could also imply all three meanings at one time.[1]

If all of mankind and jinn were the same as the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in piety, this would not add anything to Allah's dominion and kingdom. In other words, Allah's kingdom is not enriched or made greater by obedience to Him by human and jinn. Indeed, they are all within His kingdom and part of His creation, regardless of whether they obey Allah or not.

Similarly, if all of mankind and jinn were as evil as Satan, this would also not diminish Allah's kingdom and dominion in any way. Disobedience to Allah does not affect His dominion at all.

Ibn Taimiya notes that this demonstrates how different Allah's dominion is from that of man. The weak human "kings" of this world are greatly in need of servants and citizenry to provide support and obedience. The more citizens the king has, the greater is his kingdom. If the citizenry decides not to obey him, his kingdom may be lost. Allah's kingdom, therefore, is the true and absolute dominion.[2]

He is the real "king" and "owner" of all of creation. He has power over all things. Nothing escapes His rule. He is not in need of anything to assist Him in His rule. He is perfect and complete in and of Himself. In fact, He has no need to drive people to His worship, as that does not benefit Him at all. Similarly, He has no need to force people not to disobey Him, as such disobedience does not harm Him.

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[1] Ibn Taimiya, *Majmoo*, vol. 18, p. 195.

[2] Ibn Taimiya, *Majmoo*, vol. 18, p. 194.

> "O My servants, if the first and last of you and the human and jinn of you were to gather together on a piece of land and all ask of Me…any more than a needle decreases what is in the ocean when it is put into it."

The similitude here is that of one of the largest masses known to mankind (the ocean) in comparison with a very small object. A needle does not actually hold anything in it. The amount it could take from an ocean is virtually nil. The similitude is emphasized by the fact that all of mankind and jinn are at one place and at one time requesting something. If all of their requests were answered at that one time and place, this would not exhaust any of Allah's treasures.

Allah is Generous, Free of all want, Rich, able to give anything. This statement is meant to demonstrate how great Allah is. He is able to give and give endlessly without it subtracting anything from His dominion. If a person puts a needle into the ocean and draws it out, with respect to what is in the ocean, the needle has taken virtually nothing out of the ocean.

When the believer realizes this fact, he will turn to Allah and ask of Him. He will realize that it is Allah who can grant his requests. Allah is always able to grant requests made to Him. Allah will never be in a state where He is not able to grant the request of a questioner. In another hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

يَدُ اللَّهِ مَلأَى لا تَغِيضُهَا نَفَقَةٌ سَحَّاءُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ وَقَالَ أَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا أَنْفَقَ مُنْذُ خَلَقَ السَّمَاءَ
وَالأَرْضَ فَإِنَّهُ لَمْ يَغِضْ مَا فِي يَدِهِ

"Allah's hand is full. [Its fullness] is not affected by continuous spending, day and night." He [the Prophet (peace be upon him) then] said, "Do you see what He has spent since He created the Heavens and the Earth? All of it did not decrease what is in His hand." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

Ibn Taimiya's Discussion of This Portion of the Hadith

Ibn Taimiya has one of the most detailed and informative discussions of this portion of the hadith. He states that it has been interpreted in two different ways.[1]

The first interpretation is that Allah has everything existing with Him and from that storage He gives to whomever He wills. In this case, what He gives does actually decrease, although relative to the large amount He possesses, the decrease is virtually nothing. This is why, in this portion of the hadith, Allah said, "decrease what is with me," and He did not say, "decrease My dominion." Now, when things are given from one to another, they sometimes decrease their source and sometimes they do not, depending on their nature. For example, if a person has one hundred dollars and gives ten dollars to somebody else, what he has left is ninety dollars. However, one person may impart to another person some of his knowledge; the other person receives it while the giver's knowledge has not decreased in any fashion. So if the reference is to things that are with Allah, they may decrease. But His dominion does not decrease at all because what He gives is still part of His dominion.

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[1] Ibn Taimiya, *Majmoo*, vol. 18, pp. 196-201.

The second way of viewing this phrase is to understand the word, "decrease," in the same way that it is used in the famous hadith concerning Moses and Khidr. In that hadith, recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim, Khidr told Moses, upon seeing a bird take a drink from the sea, "O Moses, my knowledge and your knowledge does not decrease Allah's knowledge except like what this bird has taken from this sea." Obviously, Allah's knowledge remains with Him at all times and does not leave Him at all, even when He imparts some of it to others. In other words, the word "decrease" here does not mean decrease in the way that word is normally understood.

Therefore, what Allah gives could be part of His dominion but it can be imparted to others without any decrease in the original, in the same way that Moses' and Khidr's knowledge is separate and distinct from Allah's knowledge. Alternatively, Allah gives from what is with Him and part of His dominion but what He gives is virtually nothing in comparison to all that He has, in the same way that a needle takes virtually nothing from the mass of an ocean.

"O My servants, it is but your deeds that I reckon for you. Then I recompense you for them."

This hadith began by Allah stating the fact that He does not commit any *dhulm.* At the end of the hadith, He demonstrates His justice by showing that He is preserving the deeds that mankind is performing. All of mankind will be recompensed according to those deeds. No one will be wronged in any way. Everyone's deeds will be presented and weighed. Allah says,

فَمَن يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُۥ ﴿٧﴾ وَمَن يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُۥ

"So whoever does good equal to the weight of an atom shall see it. And whoever does evil equal to the weight of an atom shall see it" (*al-Zalzalah* 7-8).

The most apparent meaning of this phrase is that the people shall be recompensed in the Hereafter. Allah has said,

وَإِنَّمَا تُوَفَّوْنَ أُجُورَكُمْ يَوْمَ ٱلْقِيَـٰمَةِ

"And only on the Day of Resurrection shall you be recompensed in full" (*ali-Imraan* 185).

Ibn Rajab points out the recompense could possibly be both in this world and the Hereafter. Allah has said,

مَن يَعْمَلْ سُوٓءًا يُجْزَ بِهِۦ

"Whoever works evil will have the recompense thereof" (*al-Nisaa* 123). Ibn Rajab then states that it has been reported from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him)[1] that the believers will be recompensed for their evil deeds in this world while the reward for their good deeds will be stored for them for the Hereafter. However, the disbelievers will be recompensed for their good deeds in this life while their evil deeds will be stored and recompensed in the Hereafter.[2]

"The one who finds good should give praises to Allah."

Allah says,

مَن جَآءَ بِٱلْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُۥ عَشْرُ أَمْثَالِهَا ۖ وَمَن جَآءَ بِٱلسَّيِّئَةِ فَلَا يُجْزَىٰٓ إِلَّا مِثْلَهَا وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ

"Whoever brings a good deed shall have ten times the like thereof to his credit, and whoever brings an evil deed shall have only the recompense of the like thereof, and they will not be wronged" (*al-Anaam* 160).

Allah records all deeds and recompenses them. But His reward for good deeds is so just and excellent that He is deserving of praise. He is the One who mercifully ordered those good deeds, who guided the people to them deeds and helped people to perform them; He is also the One who recorded those deeds and then recompensed the person for those deeds. All of this is due to Allah's grace and goodness and He is to be praised for it.

Ibn Taimiya points out that although it is true that Allah has prescribed for Himself mercy and has promised to help the believers, this obligation that Allah has put upon Himself is different from the obligations that people have upon one another. Human obligations are based on justice but not on grace. Humans do acts on behalf of each other to benefit one another. Therefore, they are deserving of a fair and just recompense. With respect to Allah, the situation is very different, as this hadith demonstrates. Believing servants do not benefit Allah in any way. Hence, when Allah rewards them it is not a "just recompense". In reality, then, no one has a right upon Allah due to the good he has done toward Allah. Instead, it is Allah and Allah alone who, out of His grace and mercy, has made that right upon Himself. This is all a bounty and mercy from Allah.[1]

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[1] The way ibn Rajab stated this implies that he does not consider it a sound narration.

[2] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 52. Cf., al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 199.

"The one who finds other than that should not blame anyone but himself."

The one who finds that his deeds are evil has no one to blame but himself. He is the one who has chosen to remain astray, as in this hadith, "You are all astray..," instead of following the guidance that has come from Allah.

Those who do wrong may try to blame many others for their sins.[2] They sometimes blame their leaders for taking them down the wrong path. They will blame Satan for enticing them to do evil. They may even blame society for convincing them to accept as right what they must have known was wrong. This portion of the hadith shows that, in reality, they have no one to blame but themselves. When it comes to right and wrong, the influence of others is no excuse. The person himself makes his own decision what path to follow and what acts to perform. Hence, he can only blame himself for the decisions that he has made. It is him and him alone who is responsible for what he has done.

On the Day of Judgment, he will be alone with the book of his deeds. Then he will completely realize that he has no excuse and he can only blame himself for his actions. Allah says,

وَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَٰبَهُۥ بِشِمَالِهِۦ فَيَقُولُ يَٰلَيْتَنِي لَمْ أُوتَ كِتَٰبِيَهْ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَلَمْ
أَدْرِ مَا حِسَابِيَهْ ﴿٢٦﴾ يَٰلَيْتَهَا كَانَتِ ٱلْقَاضِيَةَ ﴿٢٧﴾ مَآ أَغْنَىٰ عَنِّي مَالِيَهْ ۜ ﴿٢٨﴾
هَلَكَ عَنِّي سُلْطَٰنِيَهْ ﴿٢٩﴾ خُذُوهُ فَغُلُّوهُ ﴿٣٠﴾ ثُمَّ ٱلْجَحِيمَ صَلُّوهُ

"But as for him who will be given his Record in his left hand, he will say, 'Woe to me, I wish that I had not been given my record and that I had never known how my account is. Would that it [death] had been my end. My wealth has not availed me. My power has gone from me.' [It will be said,] 'Seize him and fetter him. Then throw him in the blazing Fire'" (*al-Haaqah* 25-31).

Ibn Rajab points out that these last two phrases in this hadith may be with respect to this world or the Hereafter. In other words, if someone finds a good result due to his good deeds, he should thank and praise Allah for the good reward that Allah has given him in this world. Allah does promise a "good life" for those who do good in the verse,

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[1] Ibn Taimiya, *Majmoo*, vol. 18, pp. 202-203.

[2] According to al-Haitami, this is why the word *yaloomann* ("blames") contains the letter *noon* with a *shaddah* (stress), which emphasizes that the person might try to blame others but he, in fact, has no one to blame but himself. Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 200.

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَٰلِحًا مِّن ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهُۥ حَيَوٰةً طَيِّبَةً ۖ
وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُم بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا۟ يَعْمَلُونَ

"Whoever works righteousness— whether male or female— while he is a true believer, verily, to him We will give a good life [in this world] and We shall certainly pay them a reward [in the Hereafter] in proportion to the best of what they used to do" (*al-Nahl* 97). On the other hand, if a person does evil and then sees the bad result of it for him in this life, he should only blame himself for his original act and quickly repent to Allah. Allah says,

وَلَنُذِيقَنَّهُم مِّنَ ٱلْعَذَابِ ٱلْأَدْنَىٰ دُونَ ٱلْعَذَابِ ٱلْأَكْبَرِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

"And, verily, We shall make them taste of the near torment [in this life] before the supreme torment [in the Hereafter], in order that they may [repent and] return [to submitting to Allah]" (*al-Sajdah* 21).[1]

Three Categories of People

Ibn Taimiya states that with respect to attitude toward good deeds and sins people can be divided into three categories.[2]

The worst people are those who excuse their sins by saying that they were decreed by Allah and there was no way to escape them while at the same time they take full credit for the good deeds they perform. Hence, they blame Allah for their sins. They say, "Why did Allah make me do that?" At the same time, though, they take credit for their good deeds since they performed them by choice. They do not give Allah any hand in their doing of good deeds. They forget that Allah has made it easy for them to perform good deeds and has guided them to those good deeds. Ibn al-Jauzi has described these people by saying that when it comes to their sins, they are compulsionists but when it comes to their good deeds, they are free-willers. This is the result of nothing but their own vain desires.

The best people and those of the correct approach are those who, when they perform any good deed, thank and praise Allah for His blessing of having guided them to that deed. They realize that they are in need of Allah and cannot actually accomplish anything without Allah's grace and help. Like those who reach Paradise, they say as described in the Quran,

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[1] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 53.

[2] Ibn Taimiya, *Majmoo*, vol. 18, pp. 204-209.

ٱلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ٱلَّذِى هَدَىٰنَا لِهَـٰذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِىَ لَوْلَآ أَنْ هَدَىٰنَا ٱللَّهُ ۖ لَقَدْ جَآءَتْ رُسُلُ رَبِّنَا بِٱلْحَقِّ ۖ

"[They say,] 'All the praises and thanks be to Allah, Who has guided us to this, never could we have found guidance, were it not that Allah had guided us. Indeed, the messengers of our Lord did come with the truth'" (*al-Araaf* 43).

When these people commit sins, they confess their sins and admit that their sins were of their own doing and free-will. When they commit sins, they do not blame Allah but, instead, turn to Allah seeking forgiveness and repenting to Him. They are like their "parents" Adam and Eve who said,

رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَآ أَنفُسَنَا وَإِن لَّمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ ٱلْخَـٰسِرِينَ

"Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves. If you forgive us not, and bestow not upon us Your mercy, we shall certainly be of the losers" (*al-Araaf* 23). Their approach is much different from that of Iblis who arrogantly stated,

قَالَ فَبِمَآ أَغْوَيْتَنِى لَأَقْعُدَنَّ لَهُمْ صِرَٰطَكَ ٱلْمُسْتَقِيمَ

"[Iblis] said, 'Because You have sent me astray, surely I will sit in wait against them on Your Straight Path" (*al-Araaf* 16).

Although these people believe in *Qadar*, they do not use it as an excuse when they commit sins. They know that everything is by the Decree of Allah yet they realize that their committing of sins is by their own choice and will.

The third category of people are those who mix what is true with what is false. These are the people who believe that they alone guide themselves to goodness or evil. They believe that they do good, for example, without any guidance or help from Allah.

All Acts of Worship are for the Benefit of the Human Himself

This hadith makes it clear that Allah does not benefit from being worshipped by humans. Nor is He harmed by being disobeyed. Instead, all of the acts of worship and purification are simply for the benefit of the human himself. If he chooses to follow the path of goodness, he is only helping himself by the grace of Allah. If he chooses to follow the path of evil, he is simply harming himself and will have no one else to blame but himself.

This is a very important message. Allah has made this message very clear in numerous verses of the Quran. Note, in particular, the following:

قَدْ جَآءَكُم بَصَآئِرُ مِن رَّبِّكُمْ ۖ فَمَنْ أَبْصَرَ فَلِنَفْسِهِۦ ۖ وَمَنْ عَمِىَ فَعَلَيْهَا ۚ

"Verily, proofs have come to you from your Lord, so whosoever sees, will do so for [the good of] his own self; and whosoever blinds himself, will do so to his own harm" (*al-Anaam* 104).

قُلۡ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ قَدۡ جَآءَكُمُ ٱلۡحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكُمۡۖ فَمَنِ ٱهۡتَدَىٰ فَإِنَّمَا
يَهۡتَدِى لِنَفۡسِهِۦۖ وَمَن ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيۡهَاۖ

"Say: O mankind! Now truth has come to you from your Lord. So whoever receives guidance, he does so for the good of his own self; and whoever goes astray, does so to his own loss" (*Yoonus* 108).

وَمَن جَٰهَدَ فَإِنَّمَا يُجَٰهِدُ لِنَفۡسِهِۦٓۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَغَنِىٌّ عَنِ ٱلۡعَٰلَمِينَ

"And whoever strives, he strives only for his own [good]. Verily, Allah stands not in need of any of the creation" (*al-Ankaboot* 6).

وَمَن تَزَكَّىٰ فَإِنَّمَا يَتَزَكَّىٰ لِنَفۡسِهِۦۚ وَإِلَى ٱللَّهِ ٱلۡمَصِيرُ

"And he who purifies himself, then he purifies himself only for the benefit of his own self. And to Allah is the final return" (*Faatir* 18).

مَّنۡ عَمِلَ صَٰلِحٗا فَلِنَفۡسِهِۦۖ وَمَنۡ أَسَآءَ فَعَلَيۡهَاۗ وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِظَلَّٰمٖ لِّلۡعَبِيدِ

"Whoever does righteous deeds, it is for [the benefit of] his own self; and whoever does evil, it is against his own self. And your Lord is not at all unjust to [His] servants" (*Fussilat* 46).

وَمَن يَشۡكُرۡ فَإِنَّمَا يَشۡكُرُ لِنَفۡسِهِۦۖ وَمَن كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ غَنِىٌّ حَمِيدٌ

"And whoever gives thanks, he gives thanks for [the good of] his own self. And whoever is unthankful, then, verily, Allah is All-Rich [free of wants], Worthy of all praise" (*Luqmaan* 12).

Other Points Related to This Hadith

- Although Allah creates the acts of humans and humans commit *dhulm*, this does not mean that *dhulm* can be attributed to Allah. The acts of humans cannot be attributed to Allah, although He has created them and decreed them. He is only to be attributed by His own acts. The acts of humans are part of what He has created, just like the heavens and the earth. Obviously, He does not have the same attributes of what He created, nor is He to be described by such attributes.[1]
- The importance of establishing justice and avoiding any kind of wrongdoing is so great in the *shareeah* that ibn Taimiya concluded that

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[1] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 36; al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 192.

Allah would establish and support a just nation even if it were non-Muslim while He would not establish and support an oppressive nation, even if it were Muslim.[1]

- Justice requires knowledge. The one without knowledge cannot know what justice is. Hence, humans are ignorant wrongdoers unless they turn to the guidance of Allah.[2]
- Included among the acts of *dhulm* that one must avoid is causing harm to one's own body and soul. The physical body and life is a trust from Allah. A person is not allowed to use it any manner he wishes. Instead, he must use it properly according to the guidance of Allah. Therefore, any act that is proven to be dangerous or harmful to one's health is considered forbidden in Islam. Ibn Uthaimeen, under this category, gives the example of smoking as an act that is forbidden because it is a kind of *dhulm* against oneself. Allah has said,

  وَلَا تَقْتُلُوٓا أَنفُسَكُمْ

  "And do not kill yourselves" (*al-Nisaa* 29).[3]
- Violating another person's honor is a kind of *dhulm.* The one whose honor has been violated will be recompensed in the Hereafter, as stated earlier. Ibn Uthaimeen records that it was told to one of the early, pious Muslims that someone had backbitten him. He asked to make sure that this was true. When it was confirmed, he sent a present to the one who backbit him. The backbiter was surprised that he backbit the person and then that person sent him a present. The pious man stated, "You sent me [your] good deeds as a present [due to your backbiting]. And those good deeds are lasting. However, I sent you a present that will vanish in this world. That is the reciprocation of the present that you sent to me."[4]
- Ibn Taimiya points out that a person who has committed a great deal of *dhulm* and wrong toward others must exert himself to perform as many good deeds as he can in this life. This is because these people whom he wronged and for whom he could not redress their wrong in this life will be take some, if not all, of his good deeds in the Hereafter. Unless he has a large number of good deeds in the Hereafter, he may be left "broke", without any good deeds but with the bad deeds of others thrown on top of

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[1] Ibn Taimiya, *Majmoo*, vol. 28, p. 146.

[2] Ibn Taimiya, *Majmoo*, vol. 18, p. 169.

[3] Ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 3, p. 142. Ibn Uthaimeen also includes under this category organ transplants from deceased Muslims. He says that such is not allowed even if the deceased left a will allowing it. He argues that such a will is not valid because the act itself is forbidden and a kind of *dhulm* against his body. For this author's conclusion on that question, see Jamaal Zarabozo, "Organ and Blood Donation," *al-Jumuah* (Vol. 8, Issue 10, Shawaal 1417 A.H.) p. 18.

[4] Ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 3, p. 145.

him. He should also earnestly beseech Allah's help since Allah can redress his wrong to others by compensating them on his behalf.[1]

- If a person commits any form of *dhulm* toward another, for example, backbiting or lying about the other, and the other person was not aware of that act, what should the sinner do to repent? Some say that he must inform the person he harmed and ask for his forgiveness. The majority say that he does not need to do that. Instead, the sinner should act on behalf of the one he harmed by praying for him, asking Allah to forgive him and performing good deeds with the intention that the reward will go to the one he wronged.[2] If a person backbit someone else, he should try to make amends by saying good things about the person and remove the harm that he may have created.
- One of the great forms of *dhulm* that often exists in society is for people to be treated differently due to wealth, status or class. The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentioned this type of *dhulm* and its result when he said,

إِنَّمَا أَهْلَكَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا إِذَا سَرَقَ فِيهِمُ الشَّرِيفُ تَرَكُوهُ وَإِذَا سَرَقَ فِيهِمُ
الضَّعِيفُ أَقَامُوا عَلَيْهِ الْحَدَّ وَإِنِّي وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لَوْ أَنَّ فَاطِمَةَ بِنْتَ مُحَمَّدٍ سَرَقَتْ
لَقَطَعْتُ يَدَهَا

"The people who came before you were destroyed because when a noble among them stole, they would leave him. But if a weak person among them stole, they would inflict the punishment upon him. By the One in whose hand is my soul, I would certainly cut the hand of Faatimah ibn Muhammad off if she were to steal." (Recorded by Muslim.)

- If a person is guided to Islam, he should realize that this is a great blessing from Allah. He should then be thankful and grateful to Allah for that blessing— and he should never be ungrateful. When he responds in that proper fashion, Allah will increase His blessings upon him. Allah states,

وَإِذْ تَأَذَّنَ رَبُّكُمْ لَئِن شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ وَلَئِن كَفَرْتُمْ إِنَّ عَذَابِى
لَشَدِيدٌ

"And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed: If you give thanks, I will give you more [of My blessings]. But if you are thankless, verily, My punishment is indeed severe" (*Ibraaheem* 7).[3]

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[1] Ibn Taimiya, *Majmoo*, vol. 18, p. 187.

[2] Ibn Taimiya, *Majmoo*, vol. 18, p. 187.

[3] Cf., ibn Daqeeq al-Eid, *Sharh*, p. 65; al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 194.

- Ibn Daqeeq al-Eid and al-Haitami point out that part of the wisdom underlying having a person ask for guidance is that if guidance were bestowed upon him before his asking, he may believe that it is simply due to some knowledge he possesses. However, making him ask for guidance establishes the correct relationship between the servant and his Lord.[1]
- Believers should call others to the path of Allah. However, they must realize that guidance is not in their hands. Only Allah can place faith in the hearts of humans. Therefore, when someone embraces Islam at the hand of a Muslim, that Muslim must realize that it was not his work that brought the other to Islam. He cannot remind the other person of how he brought him to Islam. It was, in fact, Allah who gave the other person guidance and not the Muslim himself.[2]
- According to ibn Rajab, this hadith is evidence that Allah loves to be asked for all of the needs of human beings, both of this world and the Hereafter. He points out of that some of the early pious Muslims would ask Allah for all of their needs, including salt for their dough and fodder for their sheep.[3]
- A person's faith is not complete until He relies upon Allah for his guidance as well as his worldly needs. If he relies on anyone other than Allah for any of these matters, his faith is lacking and incorrect.[4]
- This hadith demonstrates the importance of supplication and how beloved it is to Allah.
- Every human should think about how weak a creature he truly is. He cannot bring about his own guidance. He cannot bring about his own food, drink and clothing. Only if Allah wills these things for him will he ever be able to achieve them. He is completely dependent upon Allah and completely weak on his own. When humans consider this fact, they should become humbled. They should lose all the pride and arrogance that many of them display in this world. Instead, they should turn to Allah as true slaves realizing that they have no power or might except by the will and mercy of Allah. They should submit to Him with complete humility and servitude.
- The Prophet (peace be upon him) was the best example when it came to seeking forgiveness from Allah. In a hadith in *Sahih al-Bukhari*, he is recorded to have said that he seeks Allah's forgiveness and repents to Him more than seventy times a day.
- This hadith also provides evidence that the root of *taqwa* or of evil is the heart. If the heart is sound, the actions will be sound. If the heart is not sound, the actions will not be sound.

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[1] Ibn Daqeeq al-Eid, *Sharh*, p. 66; al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 195.

[2] Cf., Taataay, p. 196.

[3] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, pp. 38-39.

[4] Taataay, p. 185.

- At the end of the hadith, Allah states that one must praise Allah if he finds "good" and must only blame himself if he finds "other than that". Allah did not mention the word "evil", for example, explicitly. Al-Haitami states that this might be meant to show how one should express evil things. Instead of stating them explicitly, the best speech is to make a reference to them that would be understood without having to mention them explicitly. He also states that if it is improper just to mention the evil, then how wrong must it be to actually perform the evil.[1]

Summary of the Hadith

- Allah has decreed for Himself that He will not commit any form of wrongdoing or injustice.
- Allah has also prohibited all forms of *dhulm* or wrongdoing for His slaves.
- All of mankind is lost and astray except for those whom Allah has guided. Hence, one must turn to Allah and Allah alone for guidance. Allah will guide those who sincerely turn to Him for guidance.
- All of mankind is hungry and naked save for those whom Allah feeds and clothes. Hence, everyone must turn to Allah for their sustenance and provisions as He is the only One who can grant such.
- Mankind constantly sins against its Lord. They are, therefore, in need of forgiveness. The only One who can offer forgiveness is Allah. If humans sincerely repent and turn to Allah for forgiveness, Allah will forgive them.
- Mankind cannot help or harm Allah in any way. Allah is Self-Sufficient and free of any wants. No matter how pious or evil humans are, they do not increase or decrease Allah's dominion in any way.
- Allah's dominion is so great that He could give all of the creation all that it could possibly ask for and yet that would not decrease Allah's dominion in the least.
- Allah is recording and preserving all of the deeds of mankind. Allah does no injustice whatsoever. All deeds will be presented exactly on the Day of Resurrection and everyone will be fully and fairly recompensed for them.
- If the end result of one's deeds is good, the person should praise and thank Allah for guiding him and helping him perform the good deeds.
- If the end result of one's deeds is evil, the person has no one to blame but himself. Allah is not wronging him in the least, but his own deeds and his own choice of remaining astray are what led him to his final resting place.

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[1] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 199. Cf., Taataay, p. 192.

Hadith #25
Acts of Charity

عَنْ أَبِي ذَرٍّ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ أَيْضاً أَنَّ نَاسًا مِنْ أَصْحَابِ النَّبِيِّ
صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالُوا لِلنَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّه عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَا
رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ذَهَبَ أَهْلُ الدُّثُورِ بِالأُجُورِ يُصَلُّونَ كَمَا نُصَلِّي
وَيَصُومُونَ كَمَا نَصُومُ وَيَتَصَدَّقُونَ بِفُضُولِ أَمْوَالِهِمْ قَالَ أَوَ
لَيْسَ قَدْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ مَا تَصَّدَّقُونَ إِنَّ بِكُلِّ تَسْبِيحَةٍ صَدَقَةً
وَكُلِّ تَكْبِيرَةٍ صَدَقَةً وَكُلِّ تَحْمِيدَةٍ صَدَقَةً وَكُلِّ تَهْلِيلَةٍ
صَدَقَةً وَأَمْرٌ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ صَدَقَةٌ وَنَهْيٌ عَنْ مُنْكَرٍ صَدَقَةٌ وَفِي
بُضْعِ أَحَدِكُمْ صَدَقَةٌ قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَيَأْتِي أَحَدُنَا شَهْوَتَهُ
وَيَكُونُ لَهُ فِيهَا أَجْرٌ قَالَ أَرَأَيْتُمْ لَوْ وَضَعَهَا فِي حَرَامٍ أَكَانَ
عَلَيْهِ فِيهَا وِزْرٌ فَكَذَلِكَ إِذَا وَضَعَهَا فِي الْحَلَالِ كَانَ لَهُ أَجْرًا
رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ

Also on the authority of Abu Dharr (may Allah be pleased with him): Some of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), "O Messenger of Allah, the affluent have made off with the rewards. They pray like we pray, fast like we fast and they also give in charity from their extra wealth." He [the Prophet (peace be upon him)] said, "Has not Allah made things for you to do in charity? Verily, every *tasbeehah* is a charitable act, every *takbeerah* is a charitable act, every *tahmeedah* is a charitable act, every *tahleelah* is a charitable act, ordering good is a charitable act, forbidding evil is a charitable act, and you having sexual intercourse [with your wife] is a charitable act." They said, "O

Messenger of Allah, when one of us fulfills his desire, he will have a reward for that?" He said, "Tell me, if he were to fulfill it unlawfully, would he bear that sin? Similarly, if he fulfills it lawfully, he will have a reward."
Recorded by Muslim.

Selected Vocabulary

الدثور	- This is the plural of دثر; it means lots of wealth.
الأجور	- This is the plural of أجر; it means reward, wages. It refers to what one may receive in either this life or the Hereafter. It is used only for a reward that is beneficial and not harmful, as opposed to the word جزاء, which means "recompense" whether good or bad.[1]
يصلون	- "they pray"
كما	- "as, like"
نصلي	- "we pray"
فضول	- "excess, superfluous, extra"
أموالهم	- "their wealth," the هم at the end gives the meaning, "their"
تسبيحة	- the saying of, "*Subhaanallaah*"
تكبيرة	- the saying of, "*Allaahu akbar* (Allah is greatest)"
تحميدة	- the saying of, "*al-Hamdulillaah* (All praise is due to Allah)"
تهليلة	- the saying of, "*La ilaaha illa-llaah* (There is none worthy of worship except Allah)"
صدقة	- "charity, act of charity"
بضع	- this could stand either for the private part of the woman or the actual act of sexual intercourse
شهوته	- "his desire"

Takhreej

This hadith is authentic. It was recorded by Muslim, al-Bukhari in *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, Abu Dawood, Ahmad, ibn Hibbaan, al-Baihaqi and ibn Khuzaima. It is also recorded by Ahmad, al-Baihaqi in *al-Adaab* and al-Nasaai in *Ashrat al-Nisaa* with a different chain from Abu Dharr.[2]

Muslim records a similar hadith on the authority of Abu Huraira. That hadith states:

أَنَّ فُقَرَاءَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ أَتَوْا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّه عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالُوا ذَهَبَ أَهْلُ الدُّثُورِ
بِالدَّرَجَاتِ الْعُلَى وَالنَّعِيمِ الْمُقِيمِ فَقَالَ وَمَا ذَاكَ قَالُوا يُصَلُّونَ كَمَا نُصَلِّي وَيَصُومُونَ كَمَا
نَصُومُ وَيَتَصَدَّقُونَ وَلَا نَتَصَدَّقُ وَيُعْتِقُونَ وَلَا نُعْتِقُ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

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[1] Al-Mudaabaghi, p. 203.
[2] Ibn Muhammad, pp. 158-159.

أَفَلاَ أُعَلِّمُكُمْ شَيْئًا تُدْرِكُونَ بِهِ مَنْ سَبَقَكُمْ وَتَسْبِقُونَ بِهِ مَنْ بَعْدَكُمْ وَلاَ يَكُونُ أَحَدٌ
أَفْضَلَ مِنْكُمْ إِلاَّ مَنْ صَنَعَ مِثْلَ مَا صَنَعْتُمْ قَالُوا بَلَى يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ تُسَبِّحُونَ وَتُكَبِّرُونَ
وَتَحْمَدُونَ دُبُرَ كُلِّ صَلاَةٍ ثَلاَثًا وَثَلاَثِينَ مَرَّةً قَالَ أَبُو صَالِحٍ فَرَجَعَ فُقَرَاءُ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ إِلَى
رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالُوا سَمِعَ إِخْوَانُنَا أَهْلُ الأَمْوَالِ بِمَا فَعَلْنَا فَفَعَلُوا مِثْلَهُ
فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ

"The poor of the Emigrants went to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said, 'The people of wealth have taken all of the highest ranks and blessed places.' The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, 'How is that?' They said, 'They pray like we pray and they fast like we fast, but they give charity and we do not give charity and they free slaves but we do not free slaves.' The Prophet (peace be upon him) told them, 'Shall I not teach something by which you will reach those who surpassed you and surpass those after you and no one will be superior to you except the one who does similar to what you do?' They said, 'Certainly, o Messenger of Allah.' He told them, 'Say, *subhaanallah, allaahu akbar* and *al-hamdulillaah* thirty three times after every prayer.'" Abu Saalih, the subnarrator said, "The poor Emigrants returned to the Messenger of Allah and said, 'Our brothers of wealth have heard about what we do and they do the same.' Then the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) stated, 'That is Allah's grace that He bestows upon whomsoever He wills.'"[1] Most likely, this was another similar incident that took place during the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

General Comments About the Hadith

This hadith is important because it indicates the different types of charity that exist and shows that there are various and many types of good deeds available to every Muslim. It also shows that the good deeds are not simply the ritual acts of worship that are performed by all. Instead, there are numerous good deeds that are available to the one who seeks them.[2]

About the Narrator: Abu Dharr

Abu Dharr was discussed under Hadith Number 18.

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[1] Ibn Rajab (vol. 2, p. 57), al-Hilaali (*Eeqaadh*, p. 355) and al-Arnaoot and Baajis (vol. 2, p. 57) state this hadith is also in *al-Bukhari*. Al-Bukhari has virtually the same narration but without the important last portion in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) explains to them that such is Allah's grace that He bestows upon whom He wills. It would have been beneficial had these authors pointed out that important difference in the text of al-Bukhari.

[2] Cf., al-Nawawi, *Sharh Matn*, p. 107.

"Some of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said..."

This hadith is one of the many examples that demonstrate how eager the Companions were to perform acts that were pleasing to Allah. The poorer Companions did not display any jealousy toward their richer comrades with respect to this world. They did not complain that the richer Companions had nicer clothing, nicer camels or nicer housing. That was not their concern. Their concern was only that the richer Companions, due to their wealth, were able to perform many deeds that they were not able to perform. They heard the verses of the Quran and they knew the great importance of giving in charity for the sake of Allah. This is what made them sad. They feared that they were possibly not able to please Allah as much as the richer Companions were able to.

In the Quran, Allah gives another glaring example of how sad the poorer Companions were when they could not do something for the sake of Allah. The example in the Quran is that of jihad— going out and sacrificing one's life and wealth for the sake of Allah. The poorer Companions were very sad that they did not have the means to make jihad for Allah's sake. Note how Allah describes their situation:

لَّيْسَ عَلَى ٱلضُّعَفَآءِ وَلَا عَلَى ٱلْمَرْضَىٰ وَلَا عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ مَا
يُنفِقُونَ حَرَجٌ إِذَا نَصَحُوا۟ لِلَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِۦ ۚ مَا عَلَى ٱلْمُحْسِنِينَ مِن
سَبِيلٍ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٩١﴾ وَلَا عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ إِذَا مَآ أَتَوْكَ لِتَحْمِلَهُمْ
قُلْتَ لَآ أَجِدُ مَآ أَحْمِلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ تَوَلَّوا۟ وَّأَعْيُنُهُمْ تَفِيضُ مِنَ ٱلدَّمْعِ حَزَنًا أَلَّا
يَجِدُوا۟ مَا يُنفِقُونَ

"There is no blame on those who are weak or ill or who find no resources to spend [in jihad], if they are sincere and true to Allah and His Messenger. No ground can there be against the doers of good. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. Nor [is there blame] on those who came to you to be provided with mounts, when you said, 'I can find no mounts for you,' they turned back, while their eyes overflowing with tears of grief that they could not find anything to spend [for jihad]" (*al-Tauba* 91-92).

This is the area in which believers compete. They do not compete for material things. That is not their purpose or goal in life. The Hereafter is their concern and not the petty things of this world. Instead of competing with each other for the things of this world, they race with each other for the sake of pleasing Allah more and entering Paradise. This is the true "healthy competition" that will benefit everyone. Allah says,

إِنَّ ٱلۡأَبۡرَارَ لَفِي نَعِيمٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ عَلَى ٱلۡأَرَآئِكِ يَنظُرُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ تَعۡرِفُ فِي وُجُوهِهِمۡ
نَضۡرَةَ ٱلنَّعِيمِ ﴿٢٤﴾ يُسۡقَوۡنَ مِن رَّحِيقٖ مَّخۡتُومٍ ﴿٢٥﴾ خِتَٰمُهُۥ مِسۡكٞۚ وَفِي ذَٰلِكَ
فَلۡيَتَنَافَسِ ٱلۡمُتَنَٰفِسُونَ

"Verily, the pious will be in delight [Paradise], on thrones, looking [at all things]. You will recognize in their faces the brightness of delight. They will be given to drink of pure sealed wine. The last thereof will be the smell of musk. And for this let [all] those who strive who want to strive" (*al-Mutaffifeen* 22-26).

Ibn Rajab wrote,

> When the Companions heard Allah's words, "So hasten toward all that is good" [*al-Baqara* 148 and,] "And march forth quickly in the way to forgiveness from your Lord, and for Paradise as wide as the heavens and earth" [*ali-Imraan* 134], they understood from it that it meant that each one of them should strive to be first [in doing good] before the others for that noble place and for that lofty rank. If one of them saw someone else doing something he was not capable of, he feared that his comrade who did that act would outstrip him. He would then be grieved because he was out done. They would compete with each other for the ranks of the Hereafter and race to them. As Allah has said, "For that purpose, let those who compete compete" [*al-Mutafifoon* 26]. Then came people after them who did the opposite. They began to compete for the despised world and fleeting pleasures.
>
> Al-Hasan said, "If you see a man competing with you for this world, compete with him for the Hereafter." Wuhaib ibn al-Ward said, "If you are able to outdo everyone in the race to Allah, do so." One of the early pious people said, "If a person hears that someone else did more voluntary deeds for Allah than he did, he should grieve due to that." Another one said, "If a person hears that another does more for the sake of Allah and due to that his heart then breaks and he dies, that would not be strange."[1]

Unfortunately, many times Muslims begin to compete with each other for worldly purposes. They even begin to hate each other due to what Allah has bestowed of this world upon some and not upon others. They become envious of the rich not because of the good deeds they can perform with their wealth but because of the pleasures that they are enjoying of this world. This is nothing to become jealous about. The pleasures of this world are fleeting. When Muslims begin to compete in such matters, they may be bringing about their own destruction. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

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[1] Abdul Rahmaan ibn Rajab, *Lataaif al-Maarif feema li-Mawaaim al-Aam min al-Wadhaaif* (Damascus: Dar ibn Katheer, 1996), pp. 432-433.

وَاللَّهِ لا الْفَقْرَ أَخْشَى عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَكِنْ أَخشَى عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ تُبْسَطَ عَلَيْكُمُ الدُّنْيَا كَمَا بُسِطَتْ
عَلَى مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ فَتَنَافَسُوهَا كَمَا تَنَافَسُوهَا وَتُهْلِكَكُمْ كَمَا أَهْلَكَتْهُمْ

“By Allah, it is not poverty that I fear for you. But I fear that the world will be spread out before you as it was for the people before you. Then you shall compete in it as the people before you competed in it and it shall destroy you as it destroyed them.” (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

Furthermore, if a person is not using what Allah is giving him in the proper way, it may be a source of punishment for him and not a source of joy. He will be held responsible for all of the wealth that he gained and how he used it. It would be better for a person not to have wealth than to have wealth but to use it in an improper manner.

The important question is who will enjoy the pleasures of the Hereafter. This is the concern of the true believers. The true believers, such as the Companions in this hadith, understand well the message of the following verses of the Quran directed toward those whose main concern is this life,

بَلْ تُؤْثِرُونَ ٱلْحَيَوٰةَ ٱلدُّنْيَا ﴿١٦﴾ وَٱلْأٓخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰٓ

“Nay, you prefer the life of this world although the Hereafter is better and more lasting” (*al-Ala* 16-17).

“They also give in charity from their extra wealth.”

The poor Companions specifically noted that the richer Companions give charity out of their wealth after having met their needs. Al-Mudaabaghi points out that this is an important principle. Many people are responsible for their own well-being or for the well-being of others. They are not allowed to squander their wealth or even use their wealth for good purposes if it hurts the people that they are responsible for. Hence, a person should give in charity that which is beyond both his needs and those for whom he is responsible.

Giving away wealth that one needs to support oneself is either forbidden or disliked. It is forbidden for the one who will not have the patience to put up with that action he has performed. It is even disliked for the one who does have such patience. This is based on the hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him),

كَفَى بِالْمَرْءِ إِثْمًا أَنْ يُضَيِّعَ مَنْ يَقُوتُ

"It is enough of a sin for a man to allow to be destroyed one who he is [financially] responsible for."[1] According to al-Husain, spending on those who one is financially responsible for is an obligation upon the person. Giving to people whom one is not financially responsible for is a supererogatory deed. Hence, the obligation takes precedence over the voluntary deed. Only if the obligatory deed is first fulfilled may one move on to the voluntary action.[2]

In fact, when giving wealth to others, one should begin with those one is financially responsible for or those who rely on the person to meet their needs. In another hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

الْيَدُ الْعُلْيَا خَيْرٌ مِنَ الْيَدِ السُّفْلَى وَابْدَأْ بِمَنْ تَعُولُ وَخَيْرُ الصَّدَقَةِ عَنْ ظَهْرِ غِنًى وَمَنْ يَسْتَعْفِفْ يُعِفَّهُ اللَّهُ وَمَنْ يَسْتَغْنِ يُغْنِهِ اللَّهُ

"The upper hand [that gives] is better than the lower hand [that receives]. One should start giving first to his dependents. The best object of charity is that which is given by a wealthy person. And whoever abstains from asking others for some financial help, Allah will give him and save him from asking others. And whoever is satisfied with what Allah has given him, Allah will make him self-sufficient." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim; the wording is that of al-Bukhari.)

"Has not Allah made things for you to do in charity?"

At that time, the poor Companions thought that the only form of charity was to give money to others. However, that is not the Islamic concept of charity. Charity implies doing good— to others or even to oneself. In another hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated,

كُلُّ مَعْرُوفٍ صَدَقَةٌ

"Every act of goodness is an act of charity." (Recorded by Muslim.)

Even the goodness that Allah does toward His servants is considered "charity" from Him. When discussing the shortening of the prayer during traveling, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

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[1] Al-Mudaabaghi, p. 203. With this wording, the above hadith was recorded by Ahmad, Abu Dawood and others. According to al-Albaani, it is *hasan*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 827. Muslim has something similar to it concerning slaves.

[2] Al-Husain, p. 286.

صَدَقَةٌ تَصَدَّقَ اللَّهُ بِهَا عَلَيْكُمْ فَاقْبَلُوا صَدَقَتَهُ

"That is a charitable act [*sadaqa*] that Allah has bestowed upon you, so accept His charity." (Recorded by Muslim.)

Two Types of Charity

Other than the charity of giving part of one's wealth to others, charity, in its broader Islamic concept, can be divided into two main categories. The first category consists of the acts of goodness and kindness that are done toward other human beings. Acts of goodness that are done directly toward oneself constitutes the second category. It should be noted that, in the long-run, the second category may also spill over and be beneficial to others, as shall be noted shortly.

The first category includes acts like ordering good and eradicating evil, calling others to the path of Allah, keeping oneself from harming others, teaching others about the religion, removing something harmful from the road and so forth.[1] Ibn Rajab points out that many times these types of "charity" are much more beneficial and important than the charity that involves giving up part of one's wealth.

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

تَبَسُّمُكَ فِي وَجْهِ أَخِيكَ لَكَ صَدَقَةٌ وَأَمْرُكَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهْيُكَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ صَدَقَةٌ
وَإِرْشَادُكَ الرَّجُلَ فِي أَرْضِ الضَّلَالِ لَكَ صَدَقَةٌ وَبَصَرُكَ لِلرَّجُلِ الرَّدِيءِ الْبَصَرِ لَكَ صَدَقَةٌ
وَإِمَاطَتُكَ الْحَجَرَ وَالشَّوْكَةَ وَالْعَظْمَ عَنِ الطَّرِيقِ لَكَ صَدَقَةٌ وَإِفْرَاغُكَ مِنْ دَلْوِكَ فِي دَلْوِ
أَخِيكَ لَكَ صَدَقَةٌ

"Your smiling at your brother is a charitable act for you. Your ordering good and eradicating evil is a charitable act. Your guiding a man in a land wherein he is lost is a charitable act. Your helping a man with bad eyesight to see is a charitable act. Your removing a stone, thorn or bone from the road is a charitable act. Your emptying your cup into the cup of your brother is a charitable act."[2]

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[1] Ibn Rajab states that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not mention acts like praying, fasting and so forth because he was responding to what the poor Emigrants had specifically stated and they already pointed out that everyone takes part in those acts. Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 66.

[2] Recorded by al-Tirmidhi. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 1, p. 561. There are numerous hadith of this nature from the Prophet (peace be upon him). See ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, pp. 59-64.

An important act of charity that is available to everyone, no matter how poor or rich, is the act of refraining from harming others. Abu Dharr once asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) what he should do if he does not have the ability to perform some of the good deeds. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told him,

تَكُفُّ شَرَّكَ عَنِ النَّاسِ فَإِنَّهَا صَدَقَةٌ مِنْكَ عَلَى نَفْسِكَ

"Keep your evil away from the people and that will be a charitable act from yourself upon yourself." (Recorded by Muslim. Al-Bukhari has something similar with a different wording.)

It is easy to understand how an act of goodness toward another can be considered an act of charity. However, how is it that simply saying, "*Subhaanallaah*," for example, can be considered an act of charity? There are two ways of viewing this. First, a person has a responsibility toward his own soul. He must behave properly toward it and do what is best for it. One of the best things he can do is to perform *dhikr* or words of remembrance of Allah. By doing so, he is performing an act of charity toward his own soul. Second, by performing such acts, the benefit in the long-run, Allah willing, will extend to others. Thus, he is improving his own self by such deeds. He is making himself more pious. The more pious he is, the more he will be willing to do that which will benefit others, including, perhaps, risking his own life and wealth in jihad for the sake of Allah. Hence, tending to his own soul is truly an act of charity on his part. Allah knows best.

Does This Simply Mean that the Reward for These Acts is Like the Reward for Charity?

Some of the commentators on this hadith point out that the meaning of this hadith is not that these deeds are to be considered acts of charity but that the reward for such deeds is like the reward for charity. The underlying basis for this interpretation is that the assumed words, "reward like charity" have been deleted in order to emphasize the similarity between the two. This interpretation has been given by Qadhi Iyaadh, al-Nawawi, al-Haitami, al-Munaawi, al-Mudaabaghi and Sultaan.[1]

This interpretation must be rejected. First, it goes against the clear meaning of what the Prophet (peace be upon him) said. He told them, "Has not Allah made things for you to do in charity?" Second, it requires *taqdeer* or the assumption that something is missing. In other words, it is implying that the meaning is, for example, "The reward for every *tasbeeha* is like the reward for charity." As has been noted before, *taqdeer* is only to be resorted to in cases of necessity. In this case, there is no call for it. Third, it does not take into consideration the all-encompassing nature of the Islamic concept of *sadaqa* ("charity"). As is clear from numerous hadith, "charity" does not simply include giving part of one's wealth to another. "Charity" involves all of the positive acts that one does to others. These are all acts of charity that are opened to any Muslim, rich or poor, to perform.

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[1] Both al-Nawawi and Sultaan quote Qaadhi Iyaadh and do not object to what he stated. See al-Nawawi, *Sharh Saheeh*, vol. 7, p. 90; al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 205; al-Mudaabaghi, p. 205; al-Munaawi, vol. 5, p. 21; Sultaan, p. 225. Al-Haitami says that the similarity between these acts and charity is that they are all done with the intention of pleasing Allah. That is why their reward is similar to the reward for charity.

" Verily, every *tasbeehah* is a charitable act, every *takbeerah* is a charitable act, every *tahmeedah* is a charitable act, every *tahleelah* is a charitable act."

In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) mentioned these four phrases that a Muslim should say and repeat throughout his life. According to many of the commentators on the Quran, it is these four phrases that are referred to as "lasting good righteous deeds" in the verse,

ٱلْمَالُ وَٱلْبَنُونَ زِينَةُ ٱلْحَيَوٰةِ ٱلدُّنْيَا ۖ وَٱلْبَٰقِيَٰتُ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتُ خَيْرٌ عِندَ رَبِّكَ

ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ أَمَلًا

"Wealth and children are the adornment of the life of this world. But the good righteous deeds that last are better with your Lord for rewards and better in respect of hope" (*al-Kahf* 46).[1]

The meaning of *subhaanallaah* and *al-hamdulillaah* was given in detail in the commentary to Hadith Number 23. The statement *allaahu akbar* implies that Allah is greater than anything else in existence. There is nothing as important or great as Allah. The statement *la ilaaha illa-llaah* forms the foundation of the Muslim's faith. It means that there is none who is to be worshipped except Allah.

All of a believer's life revolves around the meaning of these four phrases. He constantly reminds himself that there is none worthy of worship except Allah. The only one who he worships and submits to is Allah. The only one he is seeking to please is Allah. Furthermore, Allah is greater than anything else, especially in the heart of the believer. The Muslim should constantly extol Allah's greatness and recognize that He is above and beyond any shortcoming or blemish whatsoever. And, the Muslim should always be thankful and full of praise for Allah.

When these four phrases are the driving force in a person's life, the person's heart will become pure. He will translate into action the implications of these four phrases. He will begin to emulate the Prophet (peace be upon him) in being the most giving of all people and sacrificing the most for the sake of Allah. These are truly acts of charity for the person's own benefit and for the benefit of others.

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[1] Cf., al-Tabari, vol. 9, pp. 254-256.

"Ordering good is a charitable act, forbidding evil is a charitable act"

One important deed that is available to those without wealth is the ordering of good and the eradicating of evil. The reward for this may be much greater than the reward for giving some of one's wealth. It is this characteristic of ordering good and eradicating evil that has set this nation apart from all other peoples. Allah says,

كُنتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِٱلْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ
ٱلْمُنكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِٱللَّهِ

"You are the best of peoples ever raised up for mankind; you enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil, and you believe in Allah" (*ali-Imraan* 110).

Ordering good and forbidding evil is one of those deeds whose benefits directly go beyond the person himself. In general, prayer, fasting and so forth directly benefit the individual alone. However, ordering good and eradicating evil is for the benefit of everyone. It is a communal obligation (*fardh kifaayah*)[1] and, in general, communal obligations benefit the community as a whole. It is this aspect that has led some scholars to say that the performance of a communal obligation (*fardh kifaayah*) has more reward than an individual obligation (*fardh ain*).[2]

Furthermore, al-Nawawi points out that ordering good and eradicating evil is, in general, a communal obligation and it can become an individual obligation under certain circumstances. He believes it difficult, however, to imagine it becoming simply a voluntary deed. Therefore, it must be considered more important and more rewarded than the words of *dhikr*. This is because, as shall be discussed in detail under Hadith Number 38, the reward for an obligatory deed is greater than that for a voluntary deed.[3]

Perhaps due to the emphasis on individual freedom today, people do not seem to realize how great is the communal deed of ordering good and forbidding evil. One of the most important means by which to bring about societal peace and well-being— and the true protection of real individual rights and freedom— is the encouraging of good deeds and discouraging of evil deeds. When this attitude of encouraging what is right and discouraging what is wrong prevails throughout a society, the amount of evil is kept to a minimum, as can be seen in the example of the Prophet's society in Madina. Hence, ordering good and eradicating evil is one of the greatest charities that one can perform on behalf of society as a whole.

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[1] *Fardh kifaayah* means that the community as whole is obliged to perform such an act. If any members of the community perform that obligation, the rest are absolved from responsibility. However, if none of the community fulfills that obligation, the whole community is considered sinful.

[2] Cf., al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 205.

[3] Al-Nawawi, *Sharh Saheeh*, vol. 7, p. 91. He points out that some scholars state that the reward for obligatory deeds is seventy times that for voluntary deeds.

"Having sexual intercourse with your wife is a charitable act."

The apparent meaning of this hadith is that a person will be rewarded for having sexual intercourse with his wife even if the act was not accompanied by any virtuous intention. This is the understanding of some scholars, such as ibn Qutaiba.[1] Other scholars, including ibn Rajab and al-Haitami, object to this conclusion and state that the reward only comes about if the person had a pious intention. For example, the person will be rewarded if he had intercourse with his wife with the intention of keeping himself and his wife free of illegal sexual acts. The person may have also intended to have a pious child as the result of his act.

Another hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) states,

مَا مِنْ مُسْلِمٍ يَغْرِسُ غَرْسًا أَوْ يَزْرَعُ زَرْعًا فَيَأْكُلُ مِنْهُ طَيْرٌ أَوْ إِنْسَانٌ أَوْ بَهِيمَةٌ إِلاَّ كَانَ لَهُ بِهِ صَدَقَةٌ

"No Muslim plants a plant or sows seeds and has a bird, human or animal eat from it except that it will be for him as a charitable act." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

There is a hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) that states,

نَفَقَةُ الرَّجُلِ عَلَى أَهْلِهِ صَدَقَةٌ

"A man's spending upon his wife is charity (*sadaqa*)." (Recorded by al-Bukhari.)

These hadith also give the impression that regardless of intention, a person will get the reward of charity for what he planted or for providing for his wife. However, another narration of this hadith as found in *Sahih Muslim* clearly states that such is true when the person is seeking reward from Allah for that act. Another hadith found in *al-Bukhari* and *Muslim* also clearly restricts the reward for this act to the cases where the person has intended to please Allah. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

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[1] Ibn Rajab ascribed this opinion to ibn Qutaiba in ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 65.

إِنَّكَ لَنْ تُنْفِقَ نَفَقَةً تَبْتَغِي بِهَا وَجْهَ اللَّهِ إِلاَّ أُجِرْتَ عَلَيْهَا حَتَّى مَا تَجْعَلُ فِي فَمِ امْرَأَتِكَ

"You do not spend anything and desire by that Allah's pleasure except that you will be rewarded for it, even [the food] that you put in your wife's mouth."[1]

It seems that the reward for such permissible acts, such as fulfilling one's desire with one's wife, or obligatory acts, such as supporting one's family, is conditional upon the intention behind the act. If the intention is to do what is permissible instead of forbidden or to fulfill one's obligation as laid down by Allah, the act will be rewarded by Allah. However, if the act is performed with no such thoughts in one's mind, there may be no reward for the act and it would simply be a permissible act without any concurrent punishment or reward.

This is ibn Rajab's and al-Haitami's conclusion and it seems to be supported by the particularizing hadith just mentioned above.[2] Ibn Rajab further supports his conclusion by referring to the verse in the Quran,

لَّا خَيْرَ فِى كَثِيرٍ مِّن نَّجْوَىٰهُمْ إِلَّا مَنْ أَمَرَ بِصَدَقَةٍ أَوْ مَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ إِصْلَـٰحٍۭ بَيْنَ ٱلنَّاسِ ۚ وَمَن يَفْعَلْ ذَٰلِكَ ٱبْتِغَآءَ مَرْضَاتِ ٱللَّهِ فَسَوْفَ نُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

"There is no good in most of their secret talks save (in) him who orders charity or righteousness or conciliation between mankind; and he does this seeking the good pleasure of Allah. We shall give him a great reward" (*al-Nisaa* 114). In this verse, Allah refers to the act as good but restricts the reward by the condition that Allah's pleasure is sought by the act. This implies that the act would not be rewarded if there was no good intention or if the intention is bad.

After making the above conclusion, ibn Rajab then presents the following interesting quote from Abu Sulaimaan al-Daaraani, "If a person does a good act without any intention in it, his intention to choose Islam over all other religions would be sufficient for him." In other words, the person will be rewarded even for those worldly acts without intention simply due to his willingly entering Islam and choosing to follow that proper way of life. Allah knows best.

A Permissible Act may be Transformed into an Act Rewarded by Allah

Al-Nawawi wrote,

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[1] Even though the maintaining of one's wife is obligatory upon the husband, if he fulfills that obligation seeking Allah's pleasure, he will be rewarded for it.

[2] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 65; al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 206. It is also al-Munaawi's conclusion in al-Munaawi, vol. 5, p. 21.

> [This hadith] contains evidence that permissible acts can become acts of obedience due to sound intentions. For example, sexual intercourse can become an act of worship if the person intended to fulfill the right of his wife and to treat her well as Allah has commanded him, or for the sake of seeking a pious son, or to keep himself chaste or his wife chaste, keeping them both from looking at what is forbidden, thinking about that or considering that or due to any other pious intention.[1]

The same is true for eating, drinking and other permissible as well as necessary acts of life. If a person approaches them in the proper way, with the intention to do what is pure and legal and avoid what is forbidden, they may all be acts by which he may attain Allah's pleasure. Such is the great mercy of Allah that He may reward humans for doing what they need to do simply because they make sure that they do it in the proper, legal manner.

Al-Haitami points out that such actions can even become acts of charity if their benefits accrue to others, as is the case described here.[2]

"They said, 'O Messenger of Allah, when one of us fulfills his desire, he will have a reward for that?'..."

These Companions were surprised that simply by fulfilling one's desires one would be rewarded. The Prophet (peace be upon him) responded in a way that made it clear to all of them how that could be the case. In the same way that one is punished for doing something forbidden, one is rewarded for doing something permissible (with the intent that it a permissible act).

Analogous Deduction as a Tool of Legal Reasoning

This hadith is one of the many evidences that the scholars use to support using analogy (*qiyaas*) as a tool of legal reasoning. Historically speaking, the Dhahiris (Literalists) and Shiites have rejected *qiyaas* as a part of legal argumentation.[3] The authentic evidence, though, is clearly against their view.

Qiyaas, in general, is defined by Kamali in the following manner,

> Technically, *qiyaas* is the extension of a Shariah value from the original case, or *asl*, to a new case, because the latter has the same effective cause as the former. The original case is

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[1] Al-Nawawi, *Sharh Saheeh*, vol. 3, p. 44.

[2] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 205.

[3] The Dhahiri school seems to be having more and more of an influence these days, especially among those who try to follow the Salafi approach. It must be understood, though, that their literalist approach was not the approach that was passed on by the Prophet (peace be upon him) to his Companions and from them to their students.

> regulated by a given text and *qiyaas* seeks to extend the same textual ruling to the new case. It is by virtue of the commonality of the effective cause, or *illah*, between the original case and the new case that the application of *qiyaas* is justified. A recourse to analogy is only warranted if the solution of a new case cannot be found in the Quran, the Sunnah or a definite *ijma* [consensus].[1]

In particular, this hadith demonstrates the validity of *qiyaas al-aks* ("analogy for the opposite case"). This is where the opposite conclusion is made in a parallel case where the effective legal cause of the original case is absent. For example, punishment is the result of doing what is forbidden. The ruling is punishment and the legally effective cause that led to that punishment is the forbidden act. If this effective cause is missing, in other words, if a permissible rather than a forbidden act is performed, the opposite ruling will be concluded. Thus, in the case of a permissible act, instead of punishment one receives a reward.[2]

Qiyaas al-aks is not considered a strong form of *qiyaas* in comparison to the other types of *qiyaas*. Some legal theorists have even rejected it as a type of *qiyaas*. Al-Nawawi states that this hadith is evidence that it is acceptable.[3] However, it is only to be applied or accepted when certain conditions are met.

Other Points Related to This Hadith

- The path to pleasing Allah is very wide and affording. If a person is not able or good at performing one type of good deed that is pleasing to Allah, he may be able to fulfill other important deeds that are just as pleasing to Allah. The important point is that one should not miss the opportunity to please Allah by performing the deeds that are within his ability.
- Virtually everyone has the ability to perform some acts of "charity". There is no excuse for any Muslim not to perform the simple acts of charity that may bring him great reward from Allah.
- A Muslim should never overlook any good deed. Even a deed such as smiling when meeting one's brother is very pleasing to Allah and will be recorded for the person as an act of charity.
- Every believer should take advantage of the good deeds that are within his capability. He does not have to worry about the good deeds that are beyond his means. Instead, he must look to see what it is he is capable of and perform those deeds. Perhaps the deed that the person is able to perform,

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[1] Kamali, p. 248.

[2] For more on *qiyaas al-aks*, see Muhammad Farghali, *Buhooth fi al-Qiyaas* (Cairo: Daar al-Kitaab al-Jaamii, 1983), pp. 81-87; Ramadhaan al-Lakhmi, *Dirasaat Usooliyah fi Hujjiyat al-Qiyaas wa Aqsaamahu* (Cairo: Daar al-Huda, 1985), pp. 191-196.

[3] Al-Nawawi, *Sharh Saheeh*, vol. 7, p. 92.

although he may not realize its importance, is more pleasing to Allah than the deeds that are beyond his means.

- It is permissible to have a desire for the good that other people possess. For example, a poor person or an ignorant person may be desirous of having the wealth or knowledge of others; but this want is not permissible if it is accompanied with a malicious intent. For example, it is not allowed for a person to wish for what another person has while also wishing that the other person no longer have that good. This type of envy goes against the spirit of brotherhood in Islam.
- Sultan points out that this hadith demonstrates that the Companions put into the practice what they learned from the Prophet (peace be upon him). When they heard about good deeds such as charity, they gave in charity. However, some of them did not have the means to do so. So they brought that matter to the attention of the Prophet (peace be upon him), saying that they were not able to perform those deeds as the people of wealth were able.[1]
- The one who orders good and eradicates evil should recall that his deed is first and foremost an act of charity for others. His intention should be to better others. He should not have the intention of commanding others or putting himself in authority over others. He is doing an act of goodness toward others and this point he should always keep in mind.[2]
- If they are done with the proper intention, permissible deeds can become rewarded acts that take one closer to Allah.
- This hadith demonstrates that it is permissible to ask a scholar the reasoning for his statement. In this hadith, the Companions questioned the Prophet (peace be upon him) as to how fulfilling one's desires could lead one to being rewarded from Allah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not object to their request for an explanation. Instead, he showed them the evidence or the reasoning behind his statement.[3]
- Sultan also points out that presenting one's evidence for an opinion makes it easier for the people to accept and believe in one's statement. Therefore, the scholars should be willing to give their evidence when questioned and should not feel that this is an insult to their status.[4]
- Al-Haitami points out that this hadith demonstrates that the rich person who is thankful to Allah and gives out of his excess wealth is in a superior position to the poor person who is patient, all other things being equal. The Prophet (peace be upon him) showed the poor Companions deeds that they could perform to bring them close in reward to the richer Companions. However, when the richer Companions performed the same deeds, the

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[1] Sultaan, p. 224.

[2] Cf., ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 3, p. 198.

[3] Cf., ibn Daqeeq al-Eid, *Sharh*, p. 69.

[4] Cf., Sultaan, p. 228; al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 183.

Prophet (peace be upon him) had to explain to the poorer Companions that such was Allah's grace that He bestows upon whom He wills. He further states, as ibn Daqeeq al-Eid stated, that if a poor person and rich person are equal in performing the obligatory deeds but the rich person gives in charity while the poor person simply makes more remembrance of Allah, the place of the rich person will be superior as his voluntary deeds benefit others. Some argue that being poor is better because the person develops patience and purity. Al-Haitami counters that by saying that a rich person also experiences thankfulness to Allah as well as purifying himself from greed, lusts, boasting and so forth. Al-Haitami closes his argument by saying that the Prophet (peace be upon him) began as a poor and patient person but he ended his mission rich (able to fulfill his needs) and thankful. In general, Allah brings the life of the messengers and prophets to an end while they are in their best state of worship and closeness to Allah. This is a further sign that the place of a rich person who is thankful and giving is better than being poor person who is patient, all other things held equal. He also states that the poor person will get the reward for patience as well as for his intention to do good if he had wealth. However, the rich person will be rewarded for his actual acts of charity and his thankfulness. The intention of a poor person cannot be considered something definitive while the acts of the rich person are definitive. In other words, although a poor person may claim— even to himself— that if he had wealth he would spend it in a proper way, only Allah knows for certain if that intention is completely true or not.[1]

The important point that one can conclude from al-Haitami's discussion is that, from an Islamic perspective, there is no virtue necessarily in being poor and there is no sin in being wealthy. Indeed, being wealthy can be a much more virtuous position. It is good for Muslims to make money so that they may support themselves, their families and give the excess in charity for the sake of Allah. Allah knows best.

- In many societies there is friction or hatred between the rich or upper classes and the poor or lower classes. Taataay points out that Islam has removed all such hatred and friction from society. This is because rich believers do not exploit their wealth and use it extravagantly as is done in non-Islamic environments.[2] Instead, they use their wealth in the proper manner and they also distribute to the poor and needy. Hence, the existence of the rich is a means by which the needs of the less fortunate are met.
- This hadith also demonstrates that there is nothing shameful in the sexual act itself, as many Christians have believed. However, Islam stresses that the sexual urges be satisfied in the proper manner, according to the laws

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[1] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, pp. 207-208.

[2] Cf., Taataay, p 199.

revealed by the Creator Himself and not according to the lusts and whims of society.

Summary of the Hadith

- Everyone has some acts of charity available to him. For example, the words of *dhikr* are acts of charity as is ordering good and eradicating evil.
- Every permissible deed that a person performs with the proper intention will be considered an act of charity for him and he will be rewarded for it.
- Punishment from Allah is the result of doing what is forbidden.

Hadith #26
A Charitable Act Upon Every Bone

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ قال قال رَسُوْلُ اللهِ (صلى الله عليه وسلم) كُلُّ سُلَامَى مِنَ النَّاسِ عَلَيْهِ صَدَقَةٌ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ تَطْلُعُ فِيهِ الشَّمْسُ تَعْدِلُ بَيْنَ الِاثْنَيْنِ صَدَقَةٌ وَتُعِينُ الرَّجُلَ فِي دَابَّتِهِ فَتَحْمِلُهُ عَلَيْهَا أَوْ تَرْفَعُ لَهُ عَلَيْهَا مَتَاعَهُ صَدَقَةٌ وَالْكَلِمَةُ الطَّيِّبَةُ صَدَقَةٌ وَبِكُلِّ خُطْوَةٍ تَمْشِيهَا إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ صَدَقَةٌ وَتُمِيطُ الْأَذَى عَنِ الطَّرِيقِ صَدَقَةٌ

رَوَاهُ الْبُخَارِيُ وَ مُسْلِمٌ

On the authority of Abu Huraira who said that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "Every small bone of everyone has upon it a charitable act for every day upon which the sun rises. Bringing about justice between two is an act of charity. Helping a man get on his mount, lifting him onto it or helping him put his belongings on to it, is a charitable act. A good word is a charitable act. Every step you take toward the prayer is a charitable act. And removing a harmful thing from the path is a charitable act."
Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

Selected Vocabulary

سلامى	- According to Abu Ubaid, this word originally meant the smallest bones that are in the hoof of a camel.[1] According to Qaadhi Iyaadh, however, originally this word implied the small bones in the wrist, and ends of the hands and feet. In any case, it may also be used to refer to all of the bones and joints in a human being.[2]
تطلع	- "rises"

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[1] Quoted in ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 74.
[2] Ibn Daqeeq al-Eid, *Sharh*, p. 71.

الشمس	- "the sun"
تعدل	- "making justice"
اثنين	- "two," it could imply two people, two groups of people, two countries and so forth.[1]
تعين	- "assisting, helping"
دابته	- "his (riding) animal"
خطوة	- "step"
تميط	- "remove"
الأذى	- anything harmful
الطريق	- "the path, road"

Takhreej

This hadith is authentic. It was recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, Ahmad, ibn Khuzaima, al-Baihaqi, ibn Hibbaan and others from Sulaim ibn Jubair from Abu Huraira.

It has also been recorded from numerous other Companions through many other different chains. However, most of those other reports have weak chains to them.[2]

There are other relevant hadith of a similar nature that should be pointed out here. For example, Muslim records the following hadith on the authority of Aisha,

إِنَّهُ خُلِقَ كُلُّ إِنْسَانٍ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ عَلَى سِتِّينَ وَثَلاثِ مِائَةِ مَفْصِلٍ فَمَنْ كَبَّرَ اللَّهَ وَحَمِدَ
اللَّهَ وَهَلَّلَ اللَّهَ وَسَبَّحَ اللَّهَ وَاسْتَغْفَرَ اللَّهَ وَعَزَلَ حَجَرًا عَنْ طَرِيقِ النَّاسِ أَوْ شَوْكَةً أَوْ
عَظْمًا عَنْ طَرِيقِ النَّاسِ وَأَمَرَ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ نَهَى عَنْ مُنْكَرٍ عَدَدَ تِلْكَ السِّتِّينَ وَالثَّلاثِ
مِائَةِ السُّلامَى فَإِنَّهُ يَمْشِي يَوْمَئِذٍ وَقَدْ زَحْزَحَ نَفْسَهُ عَنِ النَّارِ

"Every human is created [by Allah] with three hundred and sixty joints. Whoever mentions Allah's greatness, praises Allah, states Allah's oneness, extols Allah, asks Allah for forgiveness, removes a stone from the path of the people or a thorn or a bone from the path of the people, orders good, or eradicates evil to the amount of those three hundred and sixty bones and joints, he walks on that day having distanced himself from the Fire." This hadith, like the previous hadith in al-Nawawi's collection, shows that the words of *dhikr* are some of the acts of charity that a person is recommended to perform on each day. The result of those charities, if done with the proper intention, is to distance oneself from the Hell-fire.

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[1] Taataay, p. 211.

[2] Cf., ibn Muhammad, pp. 160-163.

Muslim also records from Abu Dharr that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

يُصْبِحُ عَلَى كُلِّ سُلاَمَى مِنْ أَحَدِكُمْ صَدَقَةٌ فَكُلُّ تَسْبِيحَةٍ صَدَقَةٌ وَكُلُّ تَحْمِيدَةٍ صَدَقَةٌ
وَكُلُّ تَهْلِيلَةٍ صَدَقَةٌ وَكُلُّ تَكْبِيرَةٍ صَدَقَةٌ وَأَمْرٌ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ صَدَقَةٌ وَنَهْيٌ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ صَدَقَةٌ
وَيُجْزِئُ مِنْ ذَلِكَ رَكْعَتَانِ يَرْكَعُهُمَا مِنَ الضُّحَى

"Every morning there is on the bones and joints of any of you a charitable act. Every *tasbeehah* is a charitable act; every *tahmeedah* is a charitable act; every *tahleelah* is a charitable act; every *takbeerah* is a charitable act; ordering good is a charitable act; eradicating evil is a charitable act. To fulfill that charity, it is sufficient to pray two *rakat*s of *Dhuha*." This hadith mentions many of the aspects discussed in the previous hadith in al-Nawawi's collection. However, it includes an important addition: the way in which one can fulfill the acts of charity due to one's bones and joints. This is the performance of the *Dhuha* prayer that shall be commented upon later, Allah willing.

Finally, both al-Bukhari and Muslim record the following hadith,

عَلَى كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ صَدَقَةٌ قِيلَ أَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ قَالَ يَعْتَمِلُ بِيَدَيْهِ فَيَنْفَعُ نَفْسَهُ وَيَتَصَدَّقُ
قَالَ قِيلَ أَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ قَالَ يُعِينُ ذَا الْحَاجَةِ الْمَلْهُوفَ قَالَ قِيلَ لَهُ أَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ لَمْ
يَسْتَطِعْ قَالَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ أَوِ الْخَيْرِ قَالَ أَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ لَمْ يَفْعَلْ قَالَ يُمْسِكُ عَنِ الشَّرِّ
فَإِنَّهَا صَدَقَةٌ

"Charity is obligatory upon every Muslim." It was said, "What if someone does not have the means?" He said, "Let him work with his two hands, thus benefiting himself and giving charity." It was then said, "What do you say if he cannot do that?" He answered, "Then he should help one in need." Again it was said to him, "What if he cannot do that?" He replied, "Let him order virtues or goodness." It was said, "What about if he does not do that?" He answered, "He should then abstain from evil, and that will be charity on his behalf."

General Comments About the Hadith

This hadith is a great reminder of how Allah has blessed mankind. It also shows how mankind should react to the great blessings and bounties that they have generously received from their Creator.

This hadith also shows that acts of charity are not just open to those who have wealth. Instead, there are numerous deeds that one can perform that are, in reality, also acts of charity. This hadith also demonstrates the importance of doing acts of kindness toward one another.

About the Narrator: Abu Huraira

Abu Huraira was discussed under Hadith Number 9.

> "Every joint of everyone has upon it a [recommended] charity for every day upon which the sun rises."

This hadith alludes to the marvelous creation of humans. When one thinks about how humans are created and how the different parts interact with each other, one cannot help but be amazed and awed. Allah Himself has mentioned the wonderful manner in which humans have been created. Allah says,

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا ٱلْإِنسَـٰنَ فِىٓ أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ

"Verily, We created man in the best mold" (*al-Teen* 4). Allah also says,

يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلْإِنسَـٰنُ مَا غَرَّكَ بِرَبِّكَ ٱلْكَرِيمِ ۝٦ ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَكَ فَسَوَّىٰكَ

فَعَدَلَكَ ۝٧ فِىٓ أَىِّ صُورَةٍ مَّا شَآءَ رَكَّبَكَ

"O man! What has made you careless about your Lord, the Most Generous? [He] who created you, fashioned you perfectly, and gave you due proportion. In whatever form He willed, He put you together" (*al-Infitaar* 6-8).

These are some of the great signs of Allah. They should make humans wake up and realize that this creation has not come from nothing. Instead, it must have a creator and, furthermore, that creator must be a wise, all-knowing creator. Allah says in the Quran,

سَنُرِيهِمْ ءَايَـٰتِنَا فِى ٱلْـَٔافَاقِ وَفِىٓ أَنفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ ٱلْحَقُّ ۗ

"We shall show them our signs in the Universe and in their own selves until it becomes manifest to them that this is the truth" (*Fussilat* 53). Another verse states,

وَفِى ٱلْأَرْضِ ءَايَـٰتٌ لِّلْمُوقِنِينَ ۝٢٠ وَفِىٓ أَنفُسِكُمْ ۚ أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ

"And on the earth are signs for those who have faith with certainty. And also in your own selves. Will you then not see?" (*al-Dhaariyaat* 20-21).

In particular, though, how should someone react to this great blessing of the small bones and joints in one's body? The appropriate response is described in this hadith. For everyone of those bones and joints, one should do acts of charity and kindness as a means of gratitude to Allah. But this act of gratitude should not be done simply once in one's life but, in fact, it should be done every day.

The Meaning of the Word "Upon" (على)

In the Quran, Allah has told the believers to be thankful for the blessings they have received and to give thanks to Him. Allah says, for example,

فَكُلُوا۟ مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ ٱللَّهُ حَلَٰلًا طَيِّبًا وَٱشْكُرُوا۟ نِعْمَتَ ٱللَّهِ إِن كُنتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ

"So eat of the lawful and good food which Allah has provided for you. And be grateful for the bounties from Allah, if it is truly He whom you worship" (*al-Nahl* 114).

The word used by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in this hadith, على ("upon"), is usually understood to mean obligation, in other words, "obligatory upon". But the word can imply what is obligatory as well as what is recommended. Many of the commentators on this hadith understand its usage here to be that of "strong recommendation" and not that of obligation.[1] According to that understanding, the acts of gratitude due to one's bones and joints are recommended but not required. Studying the specific acts that the Prophet (peace be upon him) mentioned in this hadith would also lend itself to this conclusion.

Some commentators understand this phrase in its most general sense implying both obligation and recommendation. In other words, it is referring to acts of gratitude, some of which are obligatory and some of which are recommended.[2] From ibn Rajab's commentary on this hadith, it seems that this is the view he favors. He stated, "The apparent meaning of this hadith is that giving thanks by these acts of charity is obligatory upon the Muslim every day. But thankfulness is of two levels..."[3] Ibn Rajab states that thankfulness and gratitude to Allah can be divided into two categories: obligatory and recommended.

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[1] Al-Nawawi (*Sharh Sahrrh*, vol. 7, p. 94) ascribes this view to "the scholars". It has been explicitly stated by al-Munaawi and al-Iraaqi. See al-Mudaabaghi, p. 210.

[2] Al-Mudaabaghi, p. 210.

[3] See ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 83. He is followed in this approach by al-Bugha and Mistu (p. 187) and Sultaan (pp. 230-231). None of them, though, go into a discussion of the meaning of the word على (upon) and its interpretation here.

The thankfulness that is obligatory is where the person, out of gratitude to Allah, performs the obligatory deeds and refrains from the prohibited deeds.[1] This type of thankfulness is sufficient for a person in being thankful for the bounties of his body, health and so forth. Ibn Rajab quotes one of the earlier generations as saying, "Thankfulness is avoiding what is sinful." Another one said, "Thankfulness is not using any of [Allah's] bounties to help in disobeying Him." Abu Haazim stated that the one who only gives a verbal expression of thanks and does not give thanks with all of his body is like a person who has a piece of clothing and he takes it by its end but does not wear it. In that case, the garment does not protect him from cold, heat, snow or rain.[2]

The recommended, non-obligatory aspect of gratitude is for a person to go beyond the above and perform voluntary, recommended deeds and remain away from the disliked deeds. In other words, the person performs the voluntary prayers, voluntary fasts, voluntary charity and so forth. This is the type of gratitude to Allah that is expressed by Allah's closest and most beloved servants. The supreme example for this type of gratitude can be found in the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). He would spend so much time in prayer at night that his feet would start to swell from the long standing. When he was asked why he was doing such although his past and future sins had been forgiven, he answered,

أَفَلا أَكُونُ عَبْدًا شَكُورًا

"Shouldn't I be a thankful servant?" (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

The Significance of the Word سلامى (*Sulaama*)

In commenting on this hadith, most commentators take it for granted that the meaning of *sulaama* in this hadith are all of the bones and joints in the human body. However, this understanding may be influenced by the hadith from Aisha that mentions both *mafsil* (joints مفصل) and *sulaama* and states that they are three hundred and sixty in number.[3] This hadith is independent of that hadith and makes no reference to *mafsil* at all but only to the *sulaama*. This particular word used by the Prophet (peace be upon him) is probably of some significance.

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[1] According to ibn al-Qayyim, the principles of thankfulness to Allah are five: one humbles himself to the One who has bestowed the blessing, one loves Allah for the blessing, one admits that the blessing came from Allah and Allah alone, one praises Allah for that blessing and one uses that blessing in obedience to Allah and not disobedience. See ibn al-Qayyim, *Madaarij*, vol. 2, p. 258.

[2] Quoted in ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 84. Indeed, the gratitude toward Allah should be expressed with one's tongue, heart and limbs. For a detailed discussion of these three aspects, see Abdullah al-Fauzaan, *Kaifa Nakoona min al-Shaakireen* (Riyadh: Daar al-Muslim, 1994), pp. 51-69.

[3] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 209, for example, explicitly mentions the hadith of Aisha to explain why he understands سلامى in this hadith to mean all of the bones and joints.

As was mentioned above, specifically the word *sulaama* refers to the small bones in the hands and feet. These bones are put together in a magnificent manner. It is their interaction that allows the dexterity that humans possess in their hands. They are also what give the feet proper balance to move about.

In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) specifically used this word *sulaama* سلامى and stated that people must be thankful and do acts of charity and kindness in response to this blessing. Al-Baitaar emphasizes this point in his commentary. He states that these bones are some of the keys to the progress and civilization that humans have been able to achieve. It is these bones that allow humans to grasp, move, construct and build things. Therefore, they are a great blessing for which one must truly be thankful.[1]

To give al-Baitaar's argument more force, one can simply imagine how difficult so many daily chores would be without the use of these essential and important bones. For example, many of the forms of communication and learning are made quite easy due to these bones. When one takes the time to ponder over the blessing of these bones, one feels that he must do something out of gratitude to Allah for these great blessings.

Although these bones are of extreme importance, there may be another significant aspect to the Prophet's mentioning of these small bones. In a human's life, these small bones, however important, do not play as essential a role as the necessary organs that Allah has given human beings. The heart, the brain, the lungs and the liver, just to mention a few, are of greater significance and necessity than the bones mentioned in this hadith. The faculties of hearing, seeing and thinking are the necessary forces behind the proper use of the bones in the hands and feet. If the reaction to the small bones is one of gratitude, such that one should do acts of charity and kindness as a means of giving thanks, what should the reaction be to these essential and marvelous organs and faculties that Allah has given mankind? Obviously, the acts of gratitude must be far greater in quantity than those done for the small bones in one's hands and feet. Allah says in the Quran,

وَٱللَّهُ أَخْرَجَكُم مِّنۢ بُطُونِ أُمَّهَـٰتِكُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ شَيْـًٔا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ
ٱلسَّمْعَ وَٱلْأَبْصَـٰرَ وَٱلْأَفْـِٔدَةَ ۙ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

"Allah has brought you out from the wombs of your mothers while you knew nothing. And He gave you hearing, sight, and hearts that you might give thanks [to Allah]" (*al-Nahl* 78). This is an important lesson that one must take from this hadith.

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[1] Al-Baitaar, p. 157.

Another point must also be made. These small bones in the hands and feet are something that many people may never even stop to consider. They may be too insignificant to many. However, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has brought the believers' attention to them. They act as a reminder of another very important point: One cannot possibly count, enumerate or even realize all of the great blessings and bounties that he has received from Allah. The situation is exactly as Allah has said in the Quran,

وَإِن تَعُدُّوا۟ نِعْمَتَ ٱللَّهِ لَا تُحْصُوهَآ

"And if you count the blessings of Allah, never will you be able to count them [all]" (*Ibraaheem* 34).

Finally, there is another significant aspect that should be mentioned here. The Prophet (peace be upon him) in this hadith is reminding people of the great blessing of their bodies and health. This blessing is so great that every day a person should perform some acts in gratitude for these blessings. However, the fact is that physical well-being and good health is often overlooked. People do not think about what a great blessing it is until they become sick or decrepit. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated,

نِعْمَتَانِ مَغْبُونٌ فِيهِمَا كَثِيرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ الصِّحَّةُ وَالْفَرَاغُ

"There are two blessings whose reward many people lose: good health and free time." (Recorded by al-Bukhari.) In the hadith under discussion here, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has given a great reminder for people not to overlook this great blessing of the physical body and its health.

Why Mention "Upon which the Sun Rises"?

The Arabic word يوم (usually translated as "day") is often used for periods of time extending for more than one day or even less than one day. For example, one says, "The Day of Siffeen," referring to the Battle of Siffeen, although the battle lasted for more than one day. Therefore, in order to remove any trace of ambiguity, the Prophet (peace be upon him) explicitly mentioned, "upon which the sun rises". With this clarification, the meaning could only be "day" as in a twenty-four hour period. Therefore, the acts of charity mentioned in this hadith are to be performed by the believer on a daily basis.[1]

Al-Haitami points out that the giving thanks on a daily basis is not simply for the initial blessing of the bones but also for their being preserved by Allah on a daily basis. Their preservation and being kept free of injury or disease is yet another blessing from Allah for which man should be thankful.[2]

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[1] Cf., ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 83; al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 212.

[2] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 210.

The Significance of the Acts of Charity

It is part of Allah's great kindness and grace for His servants that He has called performing obligatory or recommended acts of gratefulness acts of charity. A person's response to giving thanks for the blessings he received is to be treated like a person performing a charitable act. In other words, the person will get rewarded for the charity that he performs as an act of thankfulness for bounties he has received. This is indeed a sign of how merciful and giving Allah is. It is as if Allah is telling the believer to express thanks to Him for the blessing of the human body by using it to assist and help Allah's servants.[1]

The Bounty of Thankfulness is "Greater" than the Worldly Bounty Itself

Many humans receive numerous bounties from Allah, yet they do not recognize that these bounties come from Allah. They, obviously, then do not give thanks and gratitude to Allah for those bounties. They receive their worldly bounties and blessings but they are missing an aspect that is much more important.

There are other individuals who have been further blessed and guided by Allah. These are the ones who recognize that those bounties have come from Allah. In return, they give thanks to Allah. These people also receive their portion of worldly blessings from Allah. However, in addition, they have received this religious blessing from Allah: being guided to giving thanks and having gratitude toward Allah. This religious blessing is much more important than any worldly blessing. This will last them beyond this life and into the Hereafter.

In fact, every worldly blessing that is not accompanied with thanks to Allah is a calamity. If Allah blesses a person and guides him to thanking Allah for a bounty he has received, that act of thankfulness is better than that worldly bounty and more beloved to Allah. Allah is pleased with the attribute of thankfulness and gratitude. And He bestows it as a special grace from Himself to whomsoever He wills.[2]

The result is that the person will realize that his act of thankfulness to Allah is yet another bounty that Allah has bestowed upon him. He, therefore, should strive once again to thank Allah for that bounty also. This continual realization will make Allah more beloved in the heart of the human and will make him try to please and be grateful to Allah to the best of his ability.

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[1] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 210.

[2] Cf., ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, pp. 82-83; al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 213.

"Bringing about justice between two is an act of charity."

This wording implies bringing peace between two people, making conciliation between two people, judging justly between two people and so forth. It implies bringing two people or parties together in such a way that one has not made something forbidden permissible or vice-versa.[1]

The importance and virtues of making things aright between people was briefly mentioned in the discussion to Hadith Number 15. In this hadith, it is described as a kind of charity toward others. This may be because of the wonderful results that it brings about. It brings about peace, love and harmony between people who may have had, for whatever reason, some disharmony in their relationship with one another. From the *shareeah* point of view, this goal is so important that it is one of the few areas in which some form of lying is considered permissible. According to al-Bugha and Mistu, reconciling relationships between individuals is a communal obligation (*fardh kifaayah*).[2] Sultan points out that the effect of such conciliatory behavior is that it will make society like one body, united and working in accord with one another.[3]

In the Quran, Allah commands Muslims to try to reconcile and bring the hearts of believers together. Allah has said,

فَٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَأَصْلِحُوا۟ ذَاتَ بَيْنِكُمْ

"So fear Allah and make reconciliation among yourselves" (*al-Anfaal* 1). Allah also says in the Quran,

إِنَّمَا ٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا۟ بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ ۚ وَٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

"The believers are nothing else than brothers. So make reconciliation between them and have fear of Allah, such that you may attain mercy" (*al-Hujuraat* 10).

Another verse states,

لَّا خَيْرَ فِى كَثِيرٍ مِّن نَّجْوَىٰهُمْ إِلَّا مَنْ أَمَرَ بِصَدَقَةٍ أَوْ مَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ إِصْلَٰحٍۭ
بَيْنَ ٱلنَّاسِ ۚ وَمَن يَفْعَلْ ذَٰلِكَ ٱبْتِغَآءَ مَرْضَاتِ ٱللَّهِ فَسَوْفَ نُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا
عَظِيمًا

"There is no good in most of their secret talks save (in) him who orders charity or righteousness or conciliation between mankind; and he does this seeking the good pleasure of Allah. We shall give him a great reward" (*al-Nisaa* 114). This verse makes it clear that making conciliation between people is an act of worship that is pleasing to Allah.

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[1] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 210.

[2] Al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 188.

[3] Sultaan, p. 231.

"Helping a man get on his mount… is a charitable act."

This is one of the simple acts by which one may please Allah and express gratitude for the many blessings he has received from Him. Sultan points out that every act wherein a Muslim helps his brother is an act that is pleasing to Allah. In fact, Muslims have been commanded by Allah to help one another in good deeds. Allah says,

وَتَعَاوَنُوا۟ عَلَى ٱلْبِرِّ وَٱلتَّقْوَىٰ

"Help you one another in virtue and piety" (*al-Maaidah* 2). Helping one another relieves the burdens and hardships of this life. In general, an individual cannot meet all of his needs without some help from others. Therefore, Muslims must come to one another's aid. Furthermore, this will help develop love and togetherness in the Muslim community, which is definitely an admirable end.[1]

In modern times, of course, this portion of the hadith may be implemented in many ways. Acts of charity would include, for example, giving another brother a ride in one's car, helping another brother to jump-start his car, helping a brother load his car and so forth. The Muslim should think of all of these acts that he could face on a day-to-day basis and remember that they are all acts of charity that he should be happy to perform in gratitude to Allah for the blessings he has received.

"A good word is a charitable act"

Here again, one finds an excellent but easy means by which to spread happiness and perform a charitable act. Very few humans are not without the physical and mental means to perform this act that is beloved to Allah and that should be performed as an expression of gratitude to Allah.

The expression, "a good word," includes many things. Sindi defines it as "any word by which Allah is remembered or any word which benefits any of Allah's creation."[2]

The words used in making remembrance of Allah (*dhikr*) are good words. Responding to another person's salutation is considered a good word. Verbally ordering what is good and eradicating what is evil are considered good words. Calling others to Islam is definitely a "good word." Advising one's brother forms part of this concept. Interceding on behalf of one's brother must also be included here. Speaking to the people in a way that makes them pleased and happy is also a charitable act for the person.[3]

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[1] Cf., Sultaan, p. 234.

[2] Sindi, *Sharh al-Arbaeen*, p. 88.

[3] Al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 188. Also see Sultaan, pp. 234-235.

An advanced form of speech is one of the aspects that distinguish humans from the animal world. One should use the very important power of speech for what is good. As was discussed in an earlier hadith, a believer should either speak what is good or remain silent. To use one's tongue in any other way is a gross misuse of this great blessing of speech that Allah has bestowed upon humans.

"Every step you take toward the prayer is a charitable act."

This portion of the hadith indicates the importance of attending the prayer in congregation in the mosque.[1] Every step one takes toward that prayer in the mosque is a charitable act in gratitude for the bounties that Allah has given a person.

There are also other hadith that talk about the importance of going to the mosque or walking to the mosque. In particular, Muslim records that the Tribe of Salamah wanted to move closer to the Prophet's mosque. The Prophet (peace be upon him) advised them not to as their steps to the mosque would be recorded for them. He also told them that for every step they take, they would be raised another rank in Paradise.

According to al-Bugha and Mistu (as well as Sultaan), the more hardship involved in attending the mosque, the greater the person will be rewarded.[2]

"And removing a harmful thing from the path [3] is a charitable act"

This is once again an act of charity in gratitude to Allah that is available to most anyone. How many Muslims see something harmful in the road, yet they think that it is not their business to do anything about it. When this feeling comes over them, it demonstrates a lack of gratitude toward their Creator. In gratitude to Allah for the many blessings that Allah has bestowed upon him, a Muslim should be willing to go and remove the harmful things from the path of the people.

Moving something harmful from the road is a sign of gratitude to Allah. In that sense, it is a clear sign of one's faith. In fact, in another hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated,

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[1] Some commentators mentioned that for those who consider the daily congregational prayers an obligation, this act of charity would be considered an obligatory act of charity. However, that does not necessarily have to be the case. Perhaps, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was pointing out the importance of walking to the prayer as opposed to getting their by other means, such as by riding one's camel. Allah knows best.

[2] Al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 189; Sultan, p. 236.

[3] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 211, states that some people interpret "path" here to mean "Allah's path" or His *shareeah.* He states that this is a far-fetched interpretation. Indeed, in that case, removing something harmful from that path would be one of the best deeds one can perform.

الإِيمَانُ بِضْعٌ وَسَبْعُونَ أَوْ بِضْعٌ وَسِتُّونَ شُعْبَةً فَأَفْضَلُهَا قَوْلُ لا إِلَهَ إِلاَّ اللَّهُ وَأَدْنَاهَا إِمَاطَةُ الأَذَى عَنِ الطَّرِيقِ وَالْحَيَاءُ شُعْبَةٌ مِنَ الإِيمَانِ

"Faith is of seventy- or sixty-some-odd branches. The most virtuous of them is the statement, 'There is none worthy of worship but Allah.' And the lowest of them is the removing of something harmful from the path. And *hayaa`* (modesty) is part of faith." (Recorded by Muslim.)

Al-Bugha and Mistu add that if the Muslims today were to abide by this teaching of the Prophet (peace be upon him), the roads of the Muslims would be the cleanest roads in the world. Everyone would take the time to stop and remove any filth or anything harmful in the road.[1] Sultan adds that it is very unfortunate that it is the disbelievers of the West who are applying this principle more than the Muslims. In general, it is their roads that are the cleanest of the world.[2]

However, there is something even more despicable going on among many Muslims today. It is not simply that they have forgotten this teaching of Islam. It is not simply that they are not willing to perform this charitable act. Beyond that, many Muslims today think that such an act as removing something harmful from the road is beneath them. Such an act as removing filth is not becoming them but is becoming only the lowest classes of society. This is a sign of how far many Muslims have strayed from the teachings of Islam. They consider a sign of gratitude to Allah and one of the branches of the faith to be beneath them. If only they would realize that it is Allah who gave them all the bounties that they have and they should demonstrate their gratefulness by performing even the smallest of tasks for they are beneficial to Allah's creation.[3]

The *Dhuha* Prayer

In the *Takhreej* section above, the hadith of Abu Dharr from *Sahih Muslim* was recorded. That hadith ended with the words, "For that [charity], it is sufficient to pray two *rakat*s at *Dhuha*." Ibn Daqeeq points out that in the two *rakat*s of *Dhuha* all of the bodily parts are used in proper worship of Allah and, hence, they suffice as an act of gratitude for that day.[1]

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[1] Al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 189. Al-Haitami (*Fath*, p. 211) and al-Bugha and Mistu add an interesting statement. They say that "it is said" that it is good, while removing anything harmful from the road, to state the testimony of faith in order to combine together the lowest branch of faith with the highest branch of faith. Allah knows best.

[2] Cf., Sultaan, p. 236.

[3] It should be noted that some commentators, like al-Haitami (*Fath*, p. 211), al-Bugha and Mistu (p. 189), followed by Sultan (p. 236), explicitly mention, "removing something harmful from the path of the Muslims." However, there is nothing in the text of this hadith or of other hadith similar to it to restrict the "path" to be the path of the Muslims only. This good deed, like many, no matter where it is performed may be rewarded by Allah. Even in non-Muslim lands, removing something harmful from the road might benefit an animal, for example, that was about to pass by and this animal benefiting from it would be sufficient to make it a good deed.

But why would the Prophet (peace be upon him) specifically mention the *Dhuha* Prayer when the two *sunnah rakat*s before the *Fajr* Prayer are considered superior to the *Dhuha* Prayer? Furthermore, why did he not mention some of the other well-known regularly performed *sunnah* prayers? Al-Haitami has offered a possible answer to this query. He states that a key difference between these prayers is that those *sunnah* prayers are performed to make-up for any shortcomings in one's obligatory prayers. In other words, they are not specifically performed simply as an act of gratitude toward Allah. Since the *Dhuha* Prayer has no such relationship to any of the obligatory prayers, it is the one that is suitable to be mentioned in this context.[2] However, according to al-Iraaqi, the *Dhuha* Prayer has been explicitly mentioned because there is some special aspect to it that is known only to Allah.[3] Allah knows best.

Regulations Concerning the *Dhuha* Prayer

The time of the *Dhuha* Prayer begins shortly after the sun rises above the horizon, about twenty minutes after sunrise according to ibn Uthaimin, until just before high noon, also about twenty minutes according to ibn Uthaimin. All of that time is the proper time for the *Dhuha* Prayer. However, it is preferred to delay the *Dhuha* Prayer based on the hadith of the Prophet,

صَلاةُ الأَوَّابِينَ حِينَ تَرْمَضُ الْفِصَالُ

"The prayer of the penitent is when your weaned camels feel the heat of the sun." (Recorded by Muslim.)[4]

The minimum that constitutes the *Dhuha* Prayer is two *rakat*s, as referred to in the hadith above. But one may pray up to eight *rakat*s, in sets of two *rakat*s each, as part of the *Dhuha* Prayer.

The hadith above is also evidence that it is proper to perform the *Dhuha* Prayer on a daily basis, even though some object to that. However, a person should give charity every day due to the bodily blessings he has received from Allah. Al-Shaukaani pointed out that the *Dhuha* Prayer is equivalent to three hundred and sixty acts of charity. Therefore, it is very much deserving to be performed on a regular basis and not missed.[5] Furthermore, Abu Huraira stated that his beloved friend, the Prophet (peace be upon him), advised him to perform three acts: fast three days of every month, perform the two *rakat*s of the *Dhuha* Prayer and perform the *Witr* Prayer before he slept. (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

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[1] Ibn Daqeeq al-Eid, *Sharh*, p. 71.

[2] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 212.

[3] Al-Iraaqi was quoted in al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 190.

[4] Ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 3, p. 189. High noon, of course, is not 12:00 but it is just prior to the time of the beginning of the *Dhuhr* Prayer.

[5] Al-Shaukani was quoted in Taataay, p. 207.

Other Points Related to This Hadith

- A verse in the Quran states, "Have We not made for him a pair of eyes and a tongue and a pair of lips?" (*al-Balad* 8-9). Al-Fudhail ibn Iyaadh read that verse one night and he cried. He was asked why he was crying and he said, "Have you ever spent a night giving thanks to Allah for giving you two eyes by which to see? Have you ever spent a night giving thanks to Allah for the tongue by which you speak?..."
- Showing gratitude and thanks is one of the important characteristics of a believer. Al-Haqeel states that faith is made up of patience and gratitude. The believer is always between and experiencing those two feelings as shown in the hadith,

عَجَبًا لِأَمْرِ الْمُؤْمِنِ إِنَّ أَمْرَهُ كُلَّهُ خَيْرٌ وَلَيْسَ ذَاكَ لِأَحَدٍ إِلاَّ لِلْمُؤْمِنِ إِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ سَرَّاءُ شَكَرَ
فَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُ وَإِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ ضَرَّاءُ صَبَرَ فَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُ

"Amazing is the affair of the believer. All of his matters are good and that is not the case except for a believer. If good things come to him, he gives thanks and that is good for him. And if harm afflicts him, he is patient and that is also good for him." (Recorded by Muslim.)[1] But the feeling and expressing of gratitude is not just toward Allah, although it is founded upon that. It is also toward anyone who does good to another person. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated,

مَنْ لَمْ يَشْكُرِ النَّاسَ لَمْ يَشْكُرِ اللَّهَ

"Whoever does not thank [other] humans does not thank Allah."[2]

- Al-Haitami points out that doing acts of charity on behalf of one's bones, joints and so forth is a means of preventing any harm or injury to those bodily parts.[3]
- One can understand from this hadith that any act of kindness toward others is an act of charity. This exemplifies the personality of a believer. He realizes that he has received great and wonderful blessings from Allah. In thanks to Allah, he uses those blessings to improve himself (such as making *dhikr*) and to help and improve those around him. Indeed, he uses

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[1] Riyaadh al-Haqeel, *Kaifa Nashkur al-Nim* (Riyadh: Daar al-Watn, 1411 A.H.), p. 8.

[2] Recorded by Ahmad and al-Tirmidhi. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 1, p. 1114.

[3] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 210.

them to improve the whole world. He never discounts any act of kindness because no matter how many such acts he performs in gratitude to Allah, he realizes that he can never match the great blessings that he has received from Allah.

- Emphasizing the importance of not belittling or discounting any good deed that one may be able to perform, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) stated,

  لا تَحْقِرَنَّ مِنَ الْمَعْرُوفِ شَيْئًا وَلَوْ أَنْ تَلْقَى أَخَاكَ بِوَجْهٍ طَلْقٍ

  "Do not belittle [or discount] any good deed [you might be able to perform], even if it is just greeting your brother with a smiling face." (Recorded by Muslim.[1])
- According to Sindi, if a sincere believer intends to perform acts of charity as gratitude for the blessings he has been given, usually, such acts will be made very easy for him to perform daily.[2]
- No matter what level of *taqwa* and good deeds a person performs, they are not sufficient in themselves to cause his entrance into Paradise. All of his efforts and works cannot be compared to the amount of blessings that Allah has bestowed upon him. Hence, he will never even be able to reach the level of ample gratitude to Allah for all of the blessings that he has received.[3] Indeed, a verse in the Quran states,

  إِنَّا هَدَيْنَٰهُ ٱلسَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَإِمَّا كَفُورًا

  "Verily, We showed him [man] the way, whether he be grateful or very ungrateful" (*al-Insaan* 3). In this verse, the word for ungrateful is in the intensive while that for thankful is not. This was explained as meaning that no matter how grateful a person is to Allah, compared with all the blessings that he has received from Allah, the most that he could be called is grateful, but not extremely grateful in comparison to the gifts and mercy he has received. However, with all of the bounties that a person has received, if he is ungrateful to Allah, then he is not just being slightly ungrateful but, by definition, he is being extremely ungrateful. That explains the differences in the two words of this verse.
- According to al-Baitaar, this hadith demonstrates that in the same way that there is *zakat* or charity to be given on one's wealth, there should be

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[1] Another version by Ahmad, with a *sahih* chain, mentions other little but good deeds, such as giving someone else a shoe-string, pouring water into another person's waterskin, removing something harmful from the road and so forth. See al-Hilaali, *Eeqaadh*, p. 371.

[2] Sindi, *Sharh al-Arbaeen*, p. 88.

[3] Cf., Taataay, p. 205.

charity given due to one's physical bounties. This charity is in the form of good deeds toward others.[1]

- This hadith makes it clear that Islam is not about monasticism and separating oneself from the community. Instead, each Muslim should contribute to the community and make the community stronger. Each Muslim should be working on behalf of others until the community becomes like one solid body, as described in a hadith. Taataay points out that those Muslims throughout the history who followed the path of monasticism and extreme asceticism were going against the teachings of the Quran and sunnah. They had introduced an innovation in Islam just like the peoples before them had introduced such an innovation.[2]

Summary of the Hadith

- The small bones in a person's hand and foot, in particular, and all of the bones and joints in a body, in general, form part of the marvelous creation that Allah has created. This marvelous creation and its magnificent workings are, in themselves, great bounties. Everyone should be thankful to Allah each and every day for such bounties.
- The gratefulness that one shows is not simply by expressing a statement. Instead, it must also be shown in acts of charity toward others. These acts of charity do not require wealth and are available to almost everyone.
- Bringing about justice between two, helping a man get on his mount or placing his belongings on his conveyance, a good word and every step one takes to the mosque are just some of the acts of charity that a Muslim should seek to perform.

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[1] Al-Baitaar, p. 160. Similarly, many scholars say that there is *zakat* on one's knowledge, which is the teaching of it to others.

[2] Cf., Taataay, p. 206.

Hadith #27
“Righteousness is Good Character…”

عَنِ النَّوَّاسِ بْنِ سَمْعَانَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ الْبِرُّ حُسْنُ الْخُلُقِ وَالإِثْمُ مَا حَاكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ وَكَرِهْتَ أَنْ يَطَّلِعَ عَلَيْهِ النَّاسُ

رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ

وَعَنْ وَابِصَةَ بْنِ مَعْبَدٍ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ أَتِيْتُ رَسُوْلَ اللهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم فَقَالَ جِئْتَ تَسْأَلُ عَنِ البِرِّ وَالإِثْمِ؟ قُلْتُ نَعَمْ قَالَ اسْتَفْتِ قَلْبَكَ البِرُّ مَا اطْمَأَنَّتْ إِلَيْهِ النَّفْسُ وىطْمَأَنَّ إِلَيْهِ القَلْبُ وَالإِثْمُ مَا حَاكَ فِي النَّفْسِ وَتَرَدَّدَ فِي الصَّدْرِ وَإِنْ أَفْتَاكَ النَّاسُ وَأَفْتَوْكَ

حَدِيْثٌ حَسَنٌ رَوَيْنَاهُ فِي مُسْنَدَيِ الإِمَامَيْنِ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ حَنْبَلِ والدَّارِمِيِّ بِإِسْنَادٍ حَسَنٍ

On the authority of al-Nawwaas ibn Samaan (may Allah be pleased with him) from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who said, “Righteousness is good character. And sin is that which wavers in your soul and which you dislike the people finding out about.”

Recorded by Muslim.

On the authority of Waabisah ibn Mabad (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: I came to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and he said, “You have come to ask about righteousness and sinfulness?” I said, “Yes.” He said, “Consult your heart. Righteousness is that which makes the soul feel tranquil and the heart feel tranquil. And sin is that which makes the soul waver and the breast uneasy, even if the people have

given you [their] verdict on it and [continue] to give you [their] verdict."

This is a *hasan* hadith. We have transmitted it in the two *Musnads* of the two Imams Ahmad ibn Hanbal and al-Daarimi with a good chain.

Selected Vocabulary

البر	- "righteousness, piety," its meaning is discussed in more detail below.
الإثم	- "sin, sinfulness"
نفسك	- "your self, your soul"
كرهت	- "you disliked"
أتيت	- "I came"
استفت	- "consult"
قلبك	- "your heart"
اطمأنت	- "made tranquil"
الصدر	- "the chest"

Takhreej

These are obviously two distinct hadith that al-Nawawi has put together under the title, "Hadith Number 27". Probably, it is the closeness of their subject matters that led him to do this.

The first hadith from al-Nawwaas ibn Samaan is authentic. It was recorded by Muslim, al-Bukhari in *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, al-Tirmidhi, al-Daarimi, ibn Abu Shaibah, al-Haakim, ibn Hibbaan, al-Baihaqi and Ahmad with the chain of Muawiyah ibn Saalih from Abdul Rahmaan ibn Jubair ibn Nufair from his father from al-Nawwaas. Ahmad, al-Daarimi and others also recorded it from Safwan from Yahya ibn Jaabir al-Qaasi from al-Nawwaas.

As for the second hadith from Waabisah, it seems that al-Nawawi combined together Ahmad's narration with al-Daarimi's narration. As noted in the text, al-Nawawi has called the second narration *hasan* and he stated that its chain is also *hasan*.[1] The statement that the chain of the hadith is *hasan* seems questionable.

Ahmad, al-Daarimi, Abu Yala, al-Tabaraani and others have all recorded something very close to the second narration mentioned by al-Nawawi. Their chain is Hammaad ibn Salamah from al-Zubair ibn Abdul Salaam from Ayyoob ibn Abdullah ibn Mikraz from Waabisah.

As ibn Rajab pointed out, this chain has two problems with it that makes it a weak narration. The first problem is that the chain is broken between Ayyoob and al-Zubair. The second problem is that al-Zubair himself is a weak narrator. Al-Daaraqutni stated that al-Zubair narrated hadith which are rejected.[1] In *Majma al-Zawaaid*, al-Haithami recorded this hadith and stated afterwards, "Recorded by Ahmad and Abu Yala. Its chain contains Ayyoob ibn Abdullah ibn Mikraz. Ibn Adi said about him, 'His hadith are not corroborated.' Ibn Hibbaan [though] considered him trustworthy (*thiqah*)."[2]

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[1] Al-Haitami (*Fath*, p. 217) points out that some of the manuscripts say that al-Nawawi declared this hadith *sahih* and stated at the end of the sentence that is chain is *jayyid* (جيد), meaning good or excellent.

Ahmad has also recorded it through the chain of Affaan from Hammaad ibn Salamah from al-Zubair ibn Abdul Salaam from Ayyoob; but al-Zubair did not hear it from Ayyoob. Al-Tabaraani and al-Bazzaar also record it from Muawiyah ibn Saalih from Abu Abdullah Muhammad al-Asadi from Waabisah. The problem with this chain is that Abu Abdullah is an unknown narrator.

The hadith has supporting evidence in a narration found in Ahmad, al-Tabaraani and al-Baghdaadi's *Tareekh Baghdaad* with the chain Zaid ibn Yahya al-Dimishqi from Abdullah ibn al-Ala from Muslim ibn Mishkam from Abu Thalaba. Abu Thalaba said he came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and asked him, "Inform me what is permissible for me and what is forbidden for me." The Prophet (peace be upon him) then told him, "Righteousness is what makes the soul feel calm and the heart feels tranquillity with it. Sin is that for which the soul does not feel tranquil and the heart does not find tranquillity, even if the people who give religious verdicts had given you a religious verdict." All the narrators in that chain are well-known and trustworthy, and the chain is considered *sahih*, as stated by Khaldoon al-Ahdab.[3]

Al-Tabaraani has yet another chain from Baqiyyah ibn al-Waleed from Ismaaeel ibn Abdullah al-Kindi from Taawus from Wathilah. However, Ismaaeel is weak.

The conclusion, therefore, based on the numerous different chains and corroborating evidence, is that the hadith of Waabisah is *hasan lighairihi*.[4] This was the conclusion of al-Suyooti, al-Albaani[5] and ibn Muhammad.[6] Al-Hilaali concludes that the hadith is *sahih*[7] although this seems a bit much. Allah knows best.

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[1] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 94.

[2] Ali ibn Abu Bakr al-Haithami, *Majma al-Zawaaid* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1992), vol. 1, p. 424. It is not unusual to find ibn Hibbaan considering a narrator trustworthy while others consider him weak.

[3] Khaldoon al-Ahdab, *Zawaaid Tareekh Baghdaad ala al-Kutub al-Sittah* (Damascus: Dar al-Qalam, 1996), vol. 6, pp. 481-482. This authentic chain confirms the meaning of the hadith of Waabisah to be correct or *sahih*. However, that in itself does not make the hadith of Waabisah authentic. This is a point that many authors seem to neglect. There are weak and even fabricated hadith whose meanings are *sahih* because they can be proven by the Quran or authentic hadith. That by itself, though, definitely does not make those weak or fabricated hadith authentic.

[4] *Hasan lighairihi* ("*hasan* due to others") means that the hadith by itself is weak but due to supporting evidence it is raised to the level of *hasan*.

[5] Al-Suyooti is quoted in al-Munaawi, vol. 1, p. 495; Al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 1, p. 224. They do not have the entire hadith but it is the hadith of Waabisah.

[6] Ibn Muhammad, p. 165. His complete discussion (as relied upon here) is found on pp. 165-167.

[7] Al-Hilaali, *Eeqaadh*, p. 375.

General Comments About the Hadith

This is another important and comprehensive hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him), wherein he has explained the essence of righteousness and sinfulness.

About the Narrator (I): al-Nawwaas ibn Samaan

Al-Nawwaas ibn Samaan was a Companion of the Prophet (peace be upon him). He, accompanying his father, met the Prophet (peace be upon him) with a delegation of his people. He lived in Madinah for one year to learn from the Prophet (peace be upon him). He was one of the *ahl al-Suffah* (the poor Muslims who lived in the Prophet's mosque). In *Sahih Muslim* he is recorded to have said that the only thing that kept him from emigrating to Madinah was his need or want to ask the Prophet (peace be upon him) questions. Those who emigrated to Madinah did not ask the Prophet (peace be upon him) many questions due to the general disapproval of asking too many questions. Hence, only those who came from outside Madinah were free to put questions to the Prophet (peace be upon him).

After the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him) he lived in Greater Syria. Seventeen hadith have been recorded on his authority. Muslim recorded three of them.

About the Narrator (II): Waabisah ibn Mabad

Waabisah ibn Mabad and visited the Prophet as part of a delegation in the year 9 A.H. He was well-known for his gentleness and his tendency to cry a great deal.

Eleven hadith have been recorded on his authority.

"Righteousness is good character."

Ibn Uthaimeen explains this portion of the hadith to mean that good character is one aspect of righteousness.[1] However, this does not seem to capture the essence of the Prophet's statement. It seems, instead, that the meaning of this phrase is similar to the meaning of the phrases discussed earlier, "The pilgrimage is Arafah," and "The religion is *naseehah*." The meaning here is, "The main or essential aspect of righteousness is good character."[2]

As noted below, depending on how one understands the meaning of the word *birr* ("righteousness"), the hadith could be left in its literal sense. The religion is truly and completely “good character” in the sense explained below.[1]

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[1] Ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 6, p. 183.

[2] Cf., ibn Daqeeq al-Eid, *Sharh*, p. 72.

The Meaning of *al-Birr* (“Righteousness”)

The word *birr* is used in two senses. The first is treating others in a good fashion. In particular, one should treat one’s parents in a good manner. This is known as *birr al-waalidain.* The word, though, is used in a more general sense to behave well toward anyone, not just one’s parents.

Sometimes the word *birr* is used in conjunction with the word *taqwa.* For example, Allah says in the Quran,

وَتَعَاوَنُوا۟ عَلَى ٱلْبِرِّ وَٱلتَّقْوَىٰ ۖ

“Help you one another in *al-birr* and *al-taqwa*” (*al-Maaidah* 2). Ibn Rajab states that in this verse *al-birr* refers to dealing with others while *al-taqwa* refers to dealing properly with Allah by obeying His commands.[2]

If this is the usage intended by Prophet (peace be upon him) in this particular statement, then the hadith must be understood to mean, “Good character is essential to righteous dealings with others.”

The second sense in which *birr* is used refers to all acts of worship and obedience to Allah, both inward and outward. This usage is found in the following verse of the Quran,

لَّيْسَ ٱلْبِرَّ أَن تُوَلُّوا۟ وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ ٱلْمَشْرِقِ وَٱلْمَغْرِبِ وَلَٰكِنَّ ٱلْبِرَّ مَنْ
ءَامَنَ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلْيَوْمِ ٱلْءَاخِرِ وَٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةِ وَٱلْكِتَٰبِ وَٱلنَّبِيِّـۧنَ وَءَاتَى ٱلْمَالَ عَلَىٰ

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[1] The importance of good character has been discussed in the commentary to Hadith Number 17. The attempt here will be to stress or discuss what was not discussed earlier. By now the reader has probably already noted how many of the hadith in this small collection are related to the behavior and character of a believer. This should not come as a surprise. In fact, ibn al-Qayyim once stated, “All of the religion is behavior and character (*khuluq*). What increases you in [good] behavior, increases you in your religion.” See ibn al-Qayyim, *Madaarij*, vol. 2, p. 294. It is important to note that ibn al-Qayyim was referring to the wider concept of *khuluq*, as explained above in the commentary, and not the narrow concept that is commonly held, namely that *khuluq* is only considered one’s behavior toward others.

[2] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 98. But then ibn Rajab said that it is possible that *al-birr* here means performing the obligatory deeds while *al-taqwa* refers to staying away from the forbidden acts. The next part of the verse states, “But do not help another in *al-ithm* or *al-udwaan.*” Ibn Rajab states that *al-ithm* (الإثم) could be in reference to sins a person commits while *al-udwaan* (العدوان) is in reference to doing wrong to others. Then he states that another possibility is that *al-ithm* refers to what is a sin in and of itself, such as drinking alcohol, fornication and so forth. In that case, *al-udwaan* refers to going beyond the limits of what is permissible in the Shariah. He gives the example of killing both those who one is allowed to kill as well as those one is not allowed to kill in executing the punishment of retaliation.

حُبِّهِۦ ذَوِى ٱلْقُرْبَىٰ وَٱلْيَتَٰمَىٰ وَٱلْمَسَٰكِينَ وَٱبْنَ ٱلسَّبِيلِ وَٱلسَّآئِلِينَ وَفِى
ٱلرِّقَابِ وَأَقَامَ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَءَاتَى ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ وَٱلْمُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَٰهَدُوا۟ۖ
وَٱلصَّٰبِرِينَ فِى ٱلْبَأْسَآءِ وَٱلضَّرَّآءِ وَحِينَ ٱلْبَأْسِۗ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ ٱلَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا۟ۖ
وَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْمُتَّقُونَ

"It is not *al-birr* (piety, righteousness) that you turn your faces toward east or west [in prayers]; but *al-birr* is [having] belief in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, the prophets, and giving one's wealth, in spite of love for it, to the kinsfolk, to the orphans, to the poor, to the wayfarer, to those who ask and to set slaves free; [it also includes those who] establish the prayer, give the zakat, fulfill their covenant when they make it, and who are patient in extreme poverty and ailment and at the time of fighting. Such are the people of the truth and they are the pious" (*al-Baqara* 177).

If this is what the Prophet (peace be upon him) meant in this hadith, it can be understood as, "Righteousness is good *khuluq*," in the general sense of *khuluq* as explained below.

Conclusion Concerning the Meaning of the First Phrase

In these two hadith, *al-birr* is juxtaposed with "sin". So, it seems clear that the meaning of *al-birr* in this sentence is "righteousness." Therefore, either the Prophet (peace be upon him) meant, "Righteousness is good character," or he meant, "The most essential aspect of righteousness is good character." When one keeps in mind the all-essential nature of *khuluq* in Islam (which is discussed below), either of the two possibilities are plausible. Allah knows best.

The Meaning of *al-Khuluq* ("Character")

Throughout the history of Islam, the word *khuluq* has been defined in different ways. For example, ibn Miskawaih has given the following as a definition for *khuluq*,

> It is a situation of the soul that calls it to perform certain deeds without any thought or pondering. This situation can be divided into two parts. One part is that which is naturally in a person from the time of his creation, like the person who becomes angry at the slightest provocation... Another part is that which is achieved through customary performance and practice. At first, it might be with pondering and thought but

> the person continues those acts until they become part of his being and nature.[1]

Al-Ghazzaali and al-Isfahaani have given definitions that are similar to the above.[2]

Al-Hulaibi points out that their definitions have some common defects, most importantly, that they neglect any aspect of intent in the deeds. They state that deeds come about without any thought or consideration on the part of the doer.[3] That is not quite correct, for if that were the case, there would be no reward from Allah as those deeds were done without any intention. The intention behind the deeds is definitely there, even if is an intention that does not take much thought or wavering in the mind.

Al-Hulaibi also points out that these definitions of *khuluq*, in general, neglect the actual deeds that are performed. They have made *khuluq* like a state of mind that is independent of the deeds that are performed. Indeed, such was specifically stated by al-Ghazzaali.[4] Ibn al-Qayyim, on the other hand, sees *khuluq* as being made up of knowledge, will and action. Actions are the result of the knowledge and will possessed by a person.[5]

In conclusion, one's *khuluq* is a combination of understanding, intention and deeds, with the last two aspects playing the most important role. If a person has good intentions followed by good deeds, it is said that he has good character or good morals. If a person has bad intentions followed up by evil deeds, it is said that he has bad character or bad morals.

The All-Inclusive Nature of *Khuluq*

Among many Muslims today, there is a misconception concerning *khuluq*. If a person is kind, nice and sweet, they say that he has a good character or *khuluq*. They may say this even if the person does not pray or fast, for example. One may even hear the statement, "He does not pray but he has a good character." This demonstrates a lack of understanding of the Islamic concept of *khuluq* and its all-inclusive nature.

Khuluq is often divided into three categories: *khuluq* (behavior) with respect to the Creator, *khuluq* with respect to other humans and *khuluq* with respect to oneself. Two other categories should be added to the commonly mentioned three categories: *khuluq* with respect to all the other creatures that Allah has created, and *khuluq* with respect to the Earth and all of its natural resources. These last two, although sometimes neglected, also have guiding principles that are taught by the religion of Islam.

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[1] Quoted in Ahmad al-Hulaibi, *Al-Masooliyah al-Khuluqiyah wa al-Jazaa alaiha* (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Rushd, 1996), p. 17.

[2] Quoted in al-Hulaibi, pp. 17-18.

[3] Al-Hulaibi, p. 19.

[4] As quoted in al-Hulaibi, p. 19.

[5] See ibn al-Qayyim, *al-Tibyaan fi Aqsaam al-Quran*, p. 135.

All of these categories comprise a person's *khuluq*. For a person to have good *khuluq*, as stressed in many hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him), he must have good *khuluq* with respect to all of the different categories of *khuluq*. It is not sufficient to be good in one category and then fail with respect to the other categories.

The most important category of *khuluq* is behavior with respect to the Creator. Ibn Uthaimeen states that this category is made up of the following three necessary aspects:[1]

(1) One must sincerely believe in whatever Allah has revealed without any doubt or wavering. Allah has said in the Quran,

وَمَنْ أَصْدَقُ مِنَ ٱللَّهِ حَدِيثًا

"And who is truer in speech than Allah?" (*al-Nisaa* 87). For example, when Allah makes a statement about the Day of Judgment, about what will happen to this creation at that time, about the rewards of Paradise and the punishment in Hell, the believer believes in them completely and has no doubt about them, even those these are all maters that are beyond the realm of human experience. This acceptance and belief is part of good behavior toward Allah.

(2) One must accept the commands of Allah and do his best to fulfill them in his life. Obviously, it is good behavior toward the Creator that when He commands a person to do something, the person does it; and when He commands a person to refrain from something, the person does so. The person does not reject or arrogantly refuse to obey what Allah has commanded.

Included in this is the attitude toward obedience. The person not only obeys Allah but does so willingly with an open heart.

On this point, ibn Uthaimeen gives an example of the prohibition of interest (*riba*). He says that a believer (in other words, the one who behaves toward Allah in the proper manner) accepts that command with an open heart and with full submission. He has no problem submitting to that command. However, the non-believer (the one who is not behaving properly toward Allah) has difficulty accepting that. He becomes uneasy and will find any means to get around that prohibition, because he knows that interest is easy money without any risks involved. This person is lacking in his behavior toward Allah.

In returning to the example mentioned above, if a person is not performing the prayers, then he is demonstrating bad behavior toward Allah. How could one say that he is a person of good character when his behavior is so deficient toward his Creator and Lord? Is it of much significance that he is behaving well toward other human beings while completely ignoring the One who created him and gave him all of his abilities? This person is missing the most important ingredient that makes up good character.

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[1] The following discussion is loosely based on Muhammad ibn Uthaimeen, *Makaarim al-Akhlaaq* (published by Khaalid Abu Saalih, 1996), pp. 16-31.

(3) One should bear Allah's decrees with pleasure and patience.[1] Not everything that occurs to a human in this world is pleasing and joyful. Allah tries humans through various means. It is part of proper behavior toward Allah that one have patience with what Allah has decreed by His wisdom. In other words, one refrains oneself from doing anything that is displeasing to Allah while going through such trials. Even better than that is to realize that what is occurring is according to Allah's wise plan. In that case, one will be pleased with everything, "good" or "bad", that he encounters in this world.

The second category of *khuluq* is behavior toward other humans,[2] including being kind, generous, persevering and forgiving toward others. It also includes refraining from harming others. Greeting one's brother with a smiling face is also part of good behavior as it immediately brings joy and happiness to others.

This aspect of good character should not be ignored. Such behavior is pleasing to Allah and it is pleasing to Allah's creatures. Indeed, responding to bad character with good character is one of the greatest ways to bring the hearts of individuals together. Allah says in the Quran,

وَلَا تَسْتَوِى ٱلْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا ٱلسَّيِّئَةُ ۚ ٱدْفَعْ بِٱلَّتِى هِىَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا ٱلَّذِى
بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُۥ عَدَٰوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُۥ وَلِىٌّ حَمِيمٌ

"The good deed and the evil deed cannot be equal. Repel [the evil] with [a deed] that is better. [If you do that] then verily he, between whom and you there was enmity, (will become) as though he was a close friend" (*Fussilat* 34).[3]

The third category is good behavior toward one's own soul.[4] A person's soul has a right upon him to treat it kindly and to do what is best for it. A person should do what he can to keep his soul from being destroyed. This is achieved by exerting oneself to do what is pleasing to the Lord. An important aspect is to seek and attain knowledge necessary to know the Straight Path.

The fourth category is good behavior toward all other living creatures on earth as well as all that Allah has placed on this earth. The behavior toward these creatures is closely related to one's behavior toward Allah and even other humans. This fact was not lost on the early Muslims as can be seen in the statement of al-Fudhail ibn Iyaadh, "By Allah, it is not allowed for you to harm a dog or a pig without just cause, how then can you harm a Muslim?"[1]

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[1] This is the heading that ibn Uthaimeen (*Makaarim*, p. 22) has given this concept. As was discussed in the commentary to Hadith Number 19, it is obligatory to bear with patience what Allah has decreed for a person. But it is even better to accept with pleasure what Allah has decreed for a person. For more details, see the previous discussion.

[2] This category can be further divided into what is obligatory and what is recommended. Many of the aspects that fall under this category are discussed in the commentaries to other hadith of this collection, in particular Hadith Number 15.

[3] That verse is stating a general principle that may not occur at all times, as the verse following it clearly demonstrates.

[4] It is strange that ibn Uthaimeen did not discuss this third category at all. Taataay (p. 227) mentioned it but just in passing.

Al-Ruhaili states that the one who is closest to Allah will also be the one who is furthest away from doing wrong to any of Allah's creation. If one behaves in a good manner toward Allah, he should then behave in a good manner toward all of Allah's creation, as Allah has not created anything without a purpose or a wisdom to it.

Al-Ruhaili gives the following guidelines with respect to how one should treat animals and other creation of Allah. First, one must abide by the laws of Allah and must behave properly without doing any wrong to any part of the creation. Second, one must use them and benefit from them only in ways that are permitted by the *shareeah*, without any excess or extreme. Third, if one must interact with such creations of Allah, he must learn how he is supposed to behave toward that creation according to the *shareeah.* Fourth, the person must have a strong feeling that such creatures or creation are all part of the creation of Allah and that, in general, they must be considered things that are submitting to Allah and His purpose. He must realize that Allah has said about these other parts of His creation,

تُسَبِّحُ لَهُ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتُ ٱلسَّبْعُ وَٱلْأَرْضُ وَمَن فِيهِنَّ ۚ وَإِن مِّن شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ
بِحَمْدِهِۦ وَلَٰكِن لَّا تَفْقَهُونَ تَسْبِيحَهُمْ ۗ إِنَّهُۥ كَانَ حَلِيمًا غَفُورًا

"The seven heavens and the earth and all that is therein glorify Him. There is not a thing but glorifies His praise, but you understand not their glorification. Truly, He is ever forbearing, oft-forgiving" (*al-Israa* 44). In this sense, all things are deserving of respect and proper behavior. Fifth, the Muslim must realize that all what is in the heaven and the earth has been created for his use, as Allah says, for example,

هُوَ ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَ لَكُم مَّا فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا

"He [Allah] is the one who created for you all that is in the earth" (*al-Baqara* 29). This, however, is a great responsibility. It is now upon the Muslim's shoulders to use those resources properly and in a beneficial manner, and not waste them, destroy them or use them in a way that is harmful. Finally, the Muslim should realize that his worldly needs are met through all of these creatures and resources created by Allah.[2]

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[1] Quoted in al-Dhahabi, *Siyar*, vol. 8, p. 427.

[2] Cf., Abdullah al-Ruhaili, *al-Akhlaaq al-Faadhilah: Qawaaid wa Muntaaliqaat li-ktisaabahaa* (Published by its author, 1996), pp. 91-93.

All of the above categories have some minimum levels that one must achieve. These are the obligatory acts related to each category. For example, that would include the minimum rights of brotherhood due the other members of the Muslim community. Beyond that are other levels that one could try to achieve but they are not obligatory.

How to Attain Good Character

A person is born and grows with certain characteristics and qualities. If these are good characteristics, the person should be thankful to Allah that Allah has placed those qualities in him. He should continue to use those qualities for the sake of Allah. These natural good qualities are a great blessing from Allah. They are with the person at all times and, in general, they flow from him without much effort or concentration.

If a person naturally has some bad qualities, such as a quick temper or miserliness, they can be changed. Bad qualities are not necessarily fixed or permanent. If that were the case, Allah would not oblige Muslims to have good character since there would be no means to develop such character.

By effort, practice and constant self-reminder, a person can change his character and behavior. He can choose a character that he wishes to have, such as remaining calm instead of being quick-tempered. He can work on himself until practice and effort manifest into a good nature and character.

Ibn Uthaimeen offers the following means by which one may improve his character:[1]

First, the person should study the Quran and hadith to understand exactly how important good character is. Upon seeing this, the person should be moved to strive for having good character. It will become utmost on his mind and he will do whatever he can to achieve it.

Second, the person should try to be in the company of people of good character. It is not easy to have good character when the surrounding people are of bad character. In the midst of people of good character, one learns from their example and behavior. Furthermore, their good character passes on to the people around them. For example, it is much easier to get mad when others are mad than when the others remain calm, peaceful and, in addition, try to calm the person down himself. The influence of one’s associates and friends was clearly indicated by the Prophet (peace be upon him) when he said,

الرَّجُلُ عَلَى دِينِ خَلِيلِهِ فَلْيَنْظُرْ أَحَدُكُمْ مَنْ يُخَالِلُ

“A person is on the religion of his close friend. Therefore, you should look to see [that is, be careful about] who you take as a close friend.”[1]

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[1] Cf., ibn Uthaimeen, *Makaarim*, pp. 32-35.

Third, the person should consider the negative results of bad character. In this life, bad character can lead to grave consequences, including the break up of one's family or friendships. In the Hereafter, it can be displeasing to Allah who may punish the person for his behavior. When a person seriously considers these matters, this should be a strong incentive for him to change his ways.

Finally, the person should always try to keep in mind the example of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), whose character was *par excellence*. The person should try to emulate the Prophet in his behavior as much as possible.[2]

In addition to what ibn Uthaimeen wrote, one should also force oneself and train oneself to do the acts associated with good character. For example, if a stingy person wishes to become generous, he should begin by forcing himself to give to others little by little. Slowly but surely, he will begin to realize that his world is not going to come to an end if he gives charity to others. His heart begins to accept that reality and over time he truly becomes generous.

A factor that ibn al-Qayyim stresses that would help one in changing behavior and character is the fear of Allah. Ibn al-Qayyim stated that fear of Allah and being conscious and dedicated to one's noble purpose are the foundations for all of the excellent characteristics and manners that one should possess.[3] It follows, then, that improving those two primary traits in one's soul should lead to a great improvement in one's character and personality.

Finally, the person should turn to Allah, as always, to seek Allah's help in becoming a person of good character. It is recorded by Ahmad in different narrations from both ibn Masood and Aisha that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to say,

اللَّهُمَّ أَحْسَنْتَ خَلْقِي فَأَحْسِنْ خُلُقِي

"O Allah, You made my physical being beautiful, so [also] make my character beautiful."[4]

This last point is of extreme importance. Everyone should realize that good character is truly a great gift from Allah and it is only Allah who can

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[1] Recorded by Ahmad, Abu Dawood and al-Tirmidhi. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 1114.

[2] This is an aspect that many people today seem to overlook. There is a lot of talk about following the sunnah but the sunnah is not simply the number of prayers in a day, fasts in a month, length of one's clothing or style of dress. The sunnah is much more than that. As was noted earlier, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was sent with the most excellent morals and behavior. This is an outstanding and necessary part of his mission. This is an extremely important part of his sunnah that everyone should try to emulate.

[3] Ibn al-Qayyim, *al-Fawaid*, pp. 210-211.

[4] Recorded by Ahmad. The hadith is either *sahih* or *hasan*. See al-Arnaoot, *et al.*, vol. 6, p. 374.

bestow such a gift. Thus, the Prophet (peace be upon him) also used to make the following supplication,

اهْدِنِي لِأَحْسَنِ الأَخْلاقِ لا يَهْدِي لِأَحْسَنِهَا إِلاَّ أَنْتَ وَاصْرِفْ عَنِّي سَيِّئَهَا لا يَصْرِفُ
عَنِّي سَيِّئَهَا إِلاَّ أَنْتَ

"Guide me to the best manners, no one [can] guide to the best of them but You. And turn me away from evil manners, no one [can] turn me away from them except You." (Recorded by Muslim.)

How Does one Know if He Has Good Character?

The first source for knowing proper manners and good character is the revelation from Allah. In the Quran and sunnah, many qualities are stated and shown to be praiseworthy. The blameworthy qualities are also pointed out in numerous verses and hadith.[1] A person should go to those verses and hadith and judge himself in the light of those teachings.

What about particular deeds? What about deeds that are not specifically covered in the Quran and sunnah? How can he judge his own deeds on a day-to-day basis and discover whether they are of good character or not? Al-Teebi has brought together two hadith that offer an answer to this question. In one hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Righteousness is good character." In the other hadith, he said, "Righteousness is that concerning which the soul feels tranquil and the heart feels tranquil." So, good behavior is that behavior concerning which the soul is at rest and pleased.[2]

Therefore, whenever a believer performs a deed or is considering doing an act, he should study that act. If he finds that his soul is at rest with that act, he will realize that the act is an act of good and proper character. Similarly, if the believer thinks about an act and his soul feels very good about that act, he should perform it as it is part of the good character that every Muslim should try to possess.

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[1] There are numerous books available that have combined together such verses and hadith. These should be studied to understand the true good character of a believer. Two such works by al-Khizindaar and al-Maidaani have already been referred to in this work.

[2] Cf., al-Teebi, vol. 10, p. 3233.

"Sin is that which wavers in your soul and which you dislike the people finding out about."

Ithm (إثم) or sin is defined as an act for which its performer is deserving of blame and censure.[1] Al-Haitami states that it encompasses every form of evil deed, whether large or small.[2]

In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave two very important signs of a sin. The first sign is a completely internal sign within the human being. It is the feeling of the soul with respect to that act. The second sign is also regarding an internal feeling but deals with the outward reaction to the act itself.

Sin causes an otherwise wholesome soul to be uneasy and troubled. The soul is unhappy and worried about sin and its consequences. It cannot rest with the idea of committing a sin.

The soul also hates that anyone should find out about the sin that it has committed. The commentators on this hadith stress that the meaning of "the people" in this hadith is the respected or religious people. The hadith is not in reference to all or any people. In other words, sin is that act which a person wishes the people he respects or the religious people should not witness. There are some people whose opinions simply do not matter when it comes to sin. For example, a person does not care if other evildoers see him commit a sin. They may not have much effect on him. They are all doing the same and their opinion is not worth much in his eyes. However, it is from the people that he respects and the people of honor that he would wish to hide his sins and bad deeds.[3]

Al-Haitami also points out that what is meant here are the deeds that one does not wish others to know about from a religious and moral point of view. He says that there are some deeds that one may not wish others to know about out of extreme shyness, embarrassment, custom and so forth. These are not necessarily sins. This is not what this hadith is referring to. It is referring to the acts that one's conscience feels bad about because the soul feels that they are morally wrong.[4]

These are the two signs of a sin. These signs occur because a person is naturally disposed to favor what leads to good results and avoid what leads to negative results. However, sometimes one's desires overtake a person, making him blind and dumb, and he does something even though he knows that the results can be very negative. When a Muslim commits fornication, for example, he knows that the result in this life could be the legal punishment while the results in the Hereafter could be the Hell-fire. The soul realizes that fact and, even though the person committed the sin, his soul cannot rest due to the negative consequences that it can expect from that act.

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[1] This is the definition given by al-Qurtubi, as quoted in Sultaan, p. 239.

[2] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 215.

[3] Cf., al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 214.

[4] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 214.

Similarly, the soul is naturally inclined to being pleased when people witness its good deeds and being saddened when people witness its evil deeds. It is this natural inclination, al-Haitami points out, that leads many people to be destroyed by the disease of *al-riyaa* (doing praiseworthy deeds for the sake of being seen by people instead of for the sake of Allah).[1] Therefore, when a person does not wish to have people see him perform an act, he, in his soul, knows that such an act must be sinful.[2]

It seems clear from the hadith that if a person's conscience does not feel bad about a deed and he does not mind that the deed be seen by others, it must not be a sin. It should, in fact, be either a permissible deed or a good deed. On the other hand, if a person has a doubt about an act, feels uneasy about a deed and hates for others to see it, then he should know for certain that that act is a sin.

But the following question now arises: Is just one of these two signs in itself an indication of a sin or are the two together at the same time a sign that an act is a sin?

Based on the second hadith of Waabisah, the bad feeling in the soul is enough of a sign for it to be clear that an act is a sin. In other words, both signs do not need to be present. It seems—- and Allah knows best— that the second sign mentioned here emphasizes or further indicates that the act is a sin. Al-Haitami states that it is a necessary consequence of the first sign. In other words, by necessity, some say, if a person feels uneasy about a deed, it will be a deed that he does not wish to have others see.[3]

He said, "You have come to ask about righteousness and sinfulness?"

This is one of the many miraculous acts of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Allah had informed him what Waabisah was coming to ask him about. Waabisah had not previously talked to the Prophet (peace be upon him) about this matter. In the narration in Ahmad, it states that the Prophet (peace be upon him) asked Waabisah to come forward and he came and sat with his knees up against the Prophet's knees. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told him, "Shall I not inform you of what it is you are going to ask me?"[4]

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[1] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 215.

[2] The obvious exception to this is where a person performs what is clearly a good deed but does not want people to see it to ensure that the act was solely for the sake of Allah and not for show.

[3] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 215.

[4] Cf, al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 215.

"Consult your heart."

This is one of the many verses and hadith that demonstrate the importance of the heart and its purification. The heart is the true key to one's salvation. Allah says in the Quran, quoting a prayer of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him),

وَلَا تُخْزِنِى يَوْمَ يُبْعَثُونَ ﴿٨٧﴾ يَوْمَ لَا يَنفَعُ مَالٌ وَلَا بَنُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾ إِلَّا مَنْ أَتَى ٱللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ

"And disgrace me not on the day [when all creatures] will be resurrected. That Day whereon neither wealth nor sons will avail, except him who brings to Allah a clean heart" (*al-Shuaraa* 87-89).

This hadith demonstrates one of the functions of the heart that is filled with faith and knowledge. This is the heart that is alive and healthy. Ibn al-Qayyim once wrote,

> Whenever the heart becomes stronger these attributes [of loving what is good, hating what is evil and so forth] become even stronger. If its life is weakened, these attributes are weakened. The sound, live heart, if it is faced with evil, flees from it by its own nature and hates that evil. This heart does not turn to it at all; as opposed to the dead heart which does not distinguish between good and evil. As Abdullah ibn Masood said, "Destroyed is the one who does not have a heart that can recognize what is good and recognize what is evil."[1]

"Righteousness is... And sin is..."

In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated, "Righteousness is that which makes the soul feel tranquil and the heart feel tranquil. And sin is that which makes the soul waver and the breast uneasy." The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentioned both the soul and the breast, implying the heart. Obviously the two go hand and hand but are stated sequentially for emphasis.

Ibn Rajab states that this part of the hadith is evidence that Allah has created humans with a natural disposition to know the truth, be comfortable with it and accept it. The undistorted soul loves the truth and despises its opposite. This conclusion is supported by many verses and hadith. For example, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) stated that Allah has said,

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[1] Muhammad Ibn al-Qayyim, *Igaatha al-Luhfaan min Masaid al-Shaitaan*, (Cairo: Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi, n.d.), vol. 1, p. 27.

إِنِّي خَلَقْتُ عِبَادِي حُنَفَاءَ كُلَّهُمْ وَإِنَّهُمْ أَتَتْهُمُ الشَّيَاطِينُ فَاجْتَالَتْهُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِم

“I created all of My slaves with sincere devotion to One God alone. But the devils came to them and drew them away from their religion.” (Recorded by Muslim.)

It seems it is not solely a matter of natural disposition that is at work here. This feeling in the heart, as al-Baitaar states, is not based on desires or lusts. Instead, it is based on the foundation that Islam has put into the heart of the believer. It is based on the belief in Allah as well as knowledge of what is permissible and what is forbidden. Likewise, it is based on *taqwa* which is in the heart. When these aspects are present in one’s heart, it is not surprising that the heart can act as a kind of filter. It can then distinguish good from that which is evil.[1]

“even if the people have given you [their] verdict on it and [continue] to give you [their] verdict.”

In Arabic, this expression stresses the fact that the people have given this verdict again and again.

What this means is that even though the people have given a person a religious ruling or many religious rulings that an act is permissible, it still may be a sin if the person feels uneasy about it. In this case, for example, the people may not object to the act but the person himself does. Therefore, he should still abstain from it as it is a sin for him.

It should be noted that this is the case if the person giving the ruling does not have any strong evidence to support his conclusion. Perhaps, the ruling is simply based on opinion or desires. In that case, the Muslim should not listen to the ruling.

If the one rendering a judgment has support for his ruling, then the Muslim must follow him unless he has stronger evidence against that conclusion. If he has no such evidence, then he follows the legal verdict. Ibn Rajab gives the examples of breaking one’s fast while traveling or sick and shortening one’s prayer while traveling. He said that some of the ignorant people do not feel comfortable doing these practices although there is sound evidence for their legality.[2]

Are These Principles General for Everybody and All Deeds?

In the hadith of al-Nawwaas, the Prophet (peace be upon him) told him that sin is what makes the soul uneasy and which one does not want people to see. In the hadith of Waabisah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) told him to consult his heart for righteousness makes the soul tranquil and sin makes the soul uneasy. Are these general principles that anyone can apply and are they for all deeds? For example, can a person commit a sin, such as drinking alcohol, and then argue that it is not sinful since his soul is at rest with it and he does not mind if people see him doing it?

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[1] Al-Baitaar, p. 164.
[2] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 102.

Al-Banna expressed the opinion that the rulings in these hadith were specific to both al-Nawwaas and Waabisah.[1] This is the view that has been attributed to al-Ghazzaali.[2] From a legal theory point of view, this opinion seems untenable. Except for the statement, "Consult *your* heart," everything that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said was in a general sense and there is no evidence to restrict it to the individual personalities involved.

Al-Haitami states that such advice is only to be given to someone like Waabisah, who the Prophet (peace be upon him) knew to be a person of faith and understanding. Al-Haitami further states that the Prophet (peace be upon him) must have been inspired by Allah to know what kind of person Waabisah was to give him such advice. This, in fact, was the practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him), who would speak to everyone according to their level of understanding and he would give everyone their proper respect.[3]

Ibn Uthaimeen, like al-Haitami, does not say that the instruction here is simply for al-Nawwaas and Waabisah. He states that it is for the true believers and not the evildoers.[4] Allah gives the believers light in their hearts and they are negatively affected by any sin they commit. On the other hand, evildoers are not very much affected by their sins. It is not important to them that people know about their sins. In fact, they perform them openly and they do not care. Even if people did not originally know about their sins, they will make it a point to tell them about their exploits. Ibn Uthaimeen cites the example of those today who travel from Muslim lands to the lands of the disbelievers and then return giving accounts of all the sins they committed in those foreign lands.[5]

The Quran explains why these evildoers take such a stance. They have been so blinded by their lusts, desires and Satan, that they are pleased with their evil deeds. Allah says in the Quran,

أَفَمَن زُيِّنَ لَهُۥ سُوٓءُ عَمَلِهِۦ فَرَءَاهُ حَسَنًا ۖ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُضِلُّ مَن يَشَآءُ وَيَهْدِى
مَن يَشَآءُ ۖ

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[1] Al-Banna, vol. 19, pp. 33-34. Most commentators did not mention this view.

[2] See al-Mudaabaghi, p. 216.

[3] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 217.

[4] Evildoers here implies the people who commit sins, including even large sins, on a regular basis. Probably, "evil-livers" would be a better way to express the term.

[5] Ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 6, pp. 268-269; also see pp. 183.

"Is he, then, to whom the evil of his deeds is made fair-seeming, so that he considers it as good, (equal to one who is rightly guided)? Verily, Allah sends astray whom He wills and guides whom He wills" (*Faatir* 8). The ruling of this hadith would not apply to such people whose moral conscience has become so dead and whose straying from the Straight Path is so great that they either cannot recognize what is evil or good, or that they believe what is clearly evil to be good.

Therefore, this principle explained in the hadith cannot be considered general for anyone to apply. This is a teaching that is specifically for those who are true believers and who are knowledgeable of the *shareeah.*

Even in the case of a true believer, one must ask as to what kinds of deeds is this principle to be applied. Al-Sindi has given one of the best answers to this question by stating that deeds are of three types:[1]

The first type of deed is one that is clearly good or permissible based on evidence from the Quran and sunnah. In this case, the person should feel free to perform that deed even if he feels some uneasiness in his soul. In this case, he must recognize that there is some shortcoming in his heart or, perhaps, Satan has been able to confuse him about a deed that is clearly permissible.

This principle is based on some examples that occurred during the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself. There were occasions in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) told his Companions to perform a deed or he himself performed a deed as an example, but the Companions did not perform the deed because they felt some uneasiness in their hearts concerning it.[2] In such cases, one ignores these feelings and follows what is firmly established in the Quran and sunnah, just as the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered his Companions to do.

The second type of deed is those that are clearly sinful according to the Quran and sunnah. This type of deed must be avoided. It is a sin regardless of whether the person feels bad about performing it or does not care if others see him performing it. Once again, the person must realize that he is facing a problem from within. There must be some disease in his heart that is not allowing his soul to feel the evil of that sin. He should examine himself, as this is a clear sign that there is something may be wrong with his faith.

With respect to these first two categories, the principle is that the *shareeah* rules. A person must give up his own inclinations or feelings for what has been stated in the *shareeah.* This is clear from the following verses of the Quran:

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[1] The three categories are from Sindi, *Sharh al-Arbaeen*, p. 91. He lists the three categories but without any explanation.

[2] For example, at the time of the signing of the Truce of Hudaibiyah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered the Companions to slaughter their sacrificial animals and remove themselves from the inviolable state of the pilgrimage. However, they hesitated to do so and did not feel right about doing so. See ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 102. That incident was recorded by al-Bukhari.

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا مُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَى ٱللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُۥٓ أَمْرًا أَن يَكُونَ لَهُمُ
ٱلْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ ۗ وَمَن يَعْصِ ٱللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُۥ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَٰلًا مُّبِينًا

"It is not for a believer, man or woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decreed a matter that they should have any option in their decision. And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he has indeed strayed into a plain error" (*al-Ahzaab* 36).

فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا۟
فِىٓ أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا۟ تَسْلِيمًا

"But no, by your Lord, they have no faith until they make you [O Muhammad] judge in all disputes between them, and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions and they submit to them with a full submission" (*al-Nisaa* 65).

The third category concerns deeds that are neither clearly righteous nor clearly sinful. In these cases, the person has to determine whether he should or should not perform such an act. This is where the principle stated in this hadith comes into play. In these matters, the act would be considered proper if the believer did not feel any hardship in his soul concerning the act and if he did not mind if people witnessed him performing that act. However, if his heart was uneasy with the act, this would be a sign that it is sinful. Hence, the believer should remain away from it.

At this point, the following question must be addressed: What then is the relationship between this principle and the commentary to Hadith Number 6? That hadith stated that the permissible was clear and the forbidden was clear. But between them there were doubtful matters. To safeguard one's religion one should remain away from the doubtful matters. However, according to the majority of the scholars, those doubtful matters are not considered forbidden or sinful.

The relationship is clear and Hadith Number 6 should be understood in the light of this hadith. A matter is doubtful when there is some sign that it may be permissible as well as some sign that it may be impermissible. If the believer's soul feels uneasy about the act, then it must be a sin and the believer must remain away from it. But, if the matter is doubtful in the sense just described and the believer also feels no hardship concerning it, it is still recommended to remain away from the deed in order to safeguard one's religion. Finally, if there is no evidence that an act may be impermissible and, in addition, the believer's heart feels no uneasiness about it, then the act may be performed and it should be considered a righteous or permissible act. Allah knows best.

Does this Hadith Lend Support to the Concept of *Ilhaam*?

Many Sufis believe in the concept of *ilhaam. Ilhaam* is defined as some knowledge being put into the heart, that the soul is at rest with, without any need to look for any supporting evidence from the Quran or sunnah. They claim that this knowledge is special to them, for Allah only gives it to special people of His chooses.[1] In *Ihyaa Uloom al-Deen*, al-Ghazzaali states that the only difference between the *ilhaam* they receive and the revelation that the prophets received is the fact that the prophets physically saw the angel while in the case of *ilhaam* the angel goes directly to the heart without the person seeing him.[2]

According to some Sufis, the person must follow the feeling or inspiration that he claims to have found in his heart. Ibn Taimiya, for example, said that some Sufi leaders he knew personally had requested their followers to seek help from them after they should die, basing that instruction on the basis of *ilhaam* that they supposedly had received.[3] In other words, *ilhaam* is an unquestionable authority in the minds of some Sufis. Indeed, some of them consider what they receive through *kashf* ("spiritual unveiling") and *ilhaam* ("inspiration") to be definitive while the texts of the Quran and sunnah are speculative. Indeed, they are even known to use it to declare a specific hadith authentic or inauthentic.[4]

This hadith stating, "Consult your heart," and others like it form part of the evidence for the validity of *ilhaam.* There is some validity to the concept as a whole but not in the sense that it is applied by many Sufis, as the above references demonstrate.

If a *mujtahid* or scholar is faced with an issue, he must first study the clear and manifest evidence related to that question as found in the Quran, sunnah and secondary sources. If there is such evidence, then it is the determining and overriding factor. Anything that contradicts them must be opposed or ignored.

It could be that the scholar sees no clear or decisive conclusion based on that evidence. However, his heart leads him to one conclusion that he feels is more pleasing to Allah. Then, according to ibn Taimiya, he is to follow that feeling for himself and only for himself. In other words, it is not a general ruling that he gives out to others. Ibn Taimiya says that such a feeling would be considered a stronger proof than a weak analogy, weak hadith and other rejected evidences that people sometimes rely on.[5]

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[1] For various definitions of *ilhaam*, see Saadiq Saadiq, *Al-Masaadir al-Aaamah lil-Talaqqi al-Soofiyah* (Riyadh: Maktaba al-Rushd, 1994), pp. 266-267.

[2] Al-Ghazzaali's statement was quoted in Saadiq, p. 267.

[3] Ibn Taimiya, *Majmoo*, vol. 17, p. 457.

[4] See Saadiq, pp. 269ff.

[5] Ibn Taimiya, *Majmoo*, vol. 10, pp. 472-473.

The reason that the conclusion is not to be applied to others is because it cannot be considered a judgment concerning the act and, more importantly, it is not based on clear evidences that other Muslims are required to follow. This is the ruling concerning such matters that one can find in a number of books on legal theory. For example, in his commentary to al-Muhilli's work on legal theory, al-Attar stated that *ilhaam* is an authority over the person himself but not over others.[1]

This does not imply that a person may follow his *ilhaam* without investigating a matter from the legal sources or in opposition to what the legal sources have stated. It is more concerned with could be called "a judgment call," where one has to decide what ruling applies in the particular case that he is facing. He may have contradictory signs showing that something could be permissible or impermissible. It is in those types of cases that he consults his heart and follows the *ilhaam* that he receives there.[2]

Al-Haitami concludes that this hadith is not in reference to the disputed *ilhaam*. He says that *ilhaam* is a feeling that is put into the heart without any surrounding evidence or research into the matter under consideration. Here, the issue is of a different nature. Here, it is because of the appearance of some signs or evidences, perhaps very obscure, that a person has some doubt about a particular act. In that case, he turns to his heart. If it is uneasy about the act, he knows that he should not perform the act even if the people are claiming that there is no harm in it.[3]

> "This is a *hasan* hadith. We have transmitted it in the two *Musnad*s of the two Imams Ahmad ibn Hanbal and al-Daarimi with a good (*hasan*) chain."

Hasan hadith with a *hasan* chain

Al-Nawawi explicitly mentioned that both the hadith and its chain are *hasan*.[4] This may sound redundant but it is not. A hadith could be *hasan* while its chain is not and vice-versa.

A hadith may be called *hasan* while it is from the category of *hasan lighairihi* or *hasan* not on its own merit alone, but only due to supporting evidence. So one hadith could have a weak chain but since it is supported by other reports, the hadith itself is not weak but it is *hasan*.

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[1] Quoted in Uthmaan ibn Ali ibn Hasan, *Minhaj al-Istidlaal ala Masaail al-Itiqaad* (Riyadh: Maktaba al-Rushd, 1992), vol. 2, p. 665.

[2] For more on the refutation of using *ilhaam* in more than the restricted sense described above, see Saadiq, pp. 434-440; ibn Hasan, vol. 2, pp. 665-667.

[3] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 216.

[4] As was noted in the *Takhreej* section, his statement that the chain is *hasan* seems to be incorrect.

On the other hand, the statement, "The chain is *hasan*," implies that all of the narrators of the hadith are of at least *hasan* quality, while some, not all, might even be of *sahih* quality. Furthermore, the chain must be unbroken. That is enough to say that the chain is *hasan* but that is not sufficient to say that the hadith itself is *hasan*. The hadith might have some defect to it or it may contradict stronger authorities. In that case, although the chain is *hasan*, the hadith itself would be rejected. In addition, a particular chain could be of *hasan* level but the hadith itself may be *sahih* if it is narrated through other channels.

The Two*Musnad*s

A *Musnad* is a type of hadith collection that is not arranged according to fiqh topic, as is the case with *Sahih al-Bukhari*[1], *Sahih Muslim* and other books available in English. Instead, a *Musnad* collection is arranged according to the Companion on whose authority the hadith is narrated.

There are many such collections of hadith. Perhaps the most famous is the *Musnad* of Ahmad. Other *Musnad* collections include the *Musnad* of Abd ibn Humaid, *Musnad* of Abu Yala, *Musnad* of al-Bazzaar, *Musnad* of al-Humaidi and *Musnad* of Abu Dawood al-Tayaalisi.

The reader may have noted that no mention was made of the *Musnad* of al-Daarimi, whom al-Nawawi has referred to. This is because al-Daarimi does not have a collection of the *Musnad* variety. Instead, his was a work known as *Sunan al-Daarimi. Sunan* works, like the *Sunan Abu Dawood* available in English, are arranged according to fiqh topic.

Why then did al-Nawawi refer to it as a *Musnad*? As al-Iraaqi explained, al-Daarimi's work is sometimes referred to as a *Musnad*. However, that is not in the sense described above. The word *musnad* also has another meaning among the scholars of hadith. It refers to hadith with chains that are unbroken and which are traced all the way back to the Prophet (peace be upon him). In general, this is the type of hadith that one finds in *Sunan al-Daarimi*. That is why it is sometimes referred to as *Musnad al-Daarimi*. But as to the type of hadith collection, it is not a *Musnad* work.[2]

It seems that it would have been clearer for al-Nawawi not to refer to both Ahmad's work and al-Daarimi's work as the two *Musnad*s, since they are not actually two of the same type of *Musnad*. Allah knows best.

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[1] The reader may have noted that the word *musnad* also appeared in the title of al-Bukhari's work. However, in that case it is used with a different meaning: *musnad* also means a hadith with a complete chain that is traced all the way back to the Prophet (peace be upon him).

[2] See the statement from al-Iraaqi as quoted in the introduction to Abdullah al-Daarimi, *Sunan al-Daarimi* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, n.d.), p. ح.

Ahmad ibn Hanbal

Ahmad ibn Hanbal lived from 164-241 A.H. (780-855 C.E.). He traveled throughout the entire Muslim world gathering hadith. He began studying hadith at the age of 15 and had many great teachers, including Imam al-Shafi'ee, Abdul Razzaaq ibn Hamaam and Sufyaan ibn Uyaina. His students included al-Bukhari, Muslim and Abu Dawood. Beyond being a scholar of hadith, he became known as the founder of the Hanbali school of fiqh.

During his lifetime, Ahmad faced a great trial from the government at that time. The government was trying to force the scholars to say that the Quran was created. Imam Ahmad refused and for that reason he was imprisoned for some time.[1]

Ahmad is well-known for his *Musnad* collection. That work contains somewhere between 30,000 and 40,000 hadith. His intention was not to collect only authentic hadith in that work but to preserve in writing as many hadith as he thought justified for the benefit of the Muslim nation and its future scholars. Hence, one can find a number of weak hadith in his collection, although, in general, he avoided very weak or rejected hadith.[2]

Imam Ahmad wrote a number of works besides his well-known *Musnad*. These works include *al-Radd ala al-Zanaadiqa wa al-Jahmiyah* ("Refutation of the heretics and Jahmites"), *al-Zuhd* (a collection of hadith related to "Islamic asceticism") and *al-Ilal wa Marifat al-Rijaal* (a book on defects in hadith and discussion of narrators of hadith).

Al-Daarimi

Abu Muhammad Abdullah ibn Abdul Rahman al-Tameemi al-Samarqaandi al-Daarimi was born in the year 181 A.H., the same year in which Abdullah ibn al-Mubaarak died. He grew up studying the Islamic sciences as was customary at his time. He traveled in search of hadith, visiting Egypt, Greater Syria, Iraq and Hijaz. He is credited with having spread the knowledge of hadith in Samarqaand. He was also known to be a great jurist. The ruler of Samarqaand wanted to appoint him as a judge but he refused. He was finally convinced, judged one case and resigned again. He died in the year 255 or 250 A.H.

Those who narrated hadith from him included al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nasaai, Abu Zara, Abu Haatim and numerous others.

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[1] For more about Ahmad and his trials, the reader should consult Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, *Saviors of Islamic Spirit* (Lucknow: Academy of Islamic Research and Publications), vol. 1, p. 67-86.

[2] In the past, Ahmad Shaakir attempted to critically discuss each hadith in the *Musnad*. However, he was only able to finish between one-third to one-half of the work. Currently, Shuaib al-Arnaoot and his colleagues are doing a similar work. At the time of the publication of this work, they had published twenty-five out of a projected forty volumes.

His *Musnad* is well accepted among the scholars of hadith. Some include it as one of the "standard six books" instead of *Sunan ibn Maajah*. Al-Suyooti mentioned that some scholars call his work *Sahih al-Daarimi.*[1]

Other Points Related to This Hadith

- Before a believer performs any act that is not clearly righteous or sinful, he should look to his heart and see what he feels about that act. If his heart feels fine with it, he should do it. If his heart is uncomfortable with it, he should leave it.[2]
- If a person is a true believer and is indifferent between having people see him perform an act or having it kept hidden from him, this is a sign that the act must be a righteous act or permissible act.
- Islam provides a strong, living internal factor that controls the behavior of believers. The question for a believer is not simply whether he can get away with an act or if there is nothing in the secular law, for example, that prohibits that act. He, instead, stands in front of the "higher authority" who knows what is in his heart. He will not perform an act, even if he could easily get away with it, if inside he does not feel it is righteous.[3]
- This hadith could imply that simply considering the performance an evil deed is a sin in itself. The act of thinking about committing a sin may meet the two conditions stated: The soul feels uneasy about it and the person would not like others to know that he considered doing such a deed. However, other evidence demonstrates that this is not necessarily the case. Allah does not hold a person sinful for a wrongful deed that he thought about but did not speak about or act upon. Furthermore, if the person abandoned that evil thought and did not act upon it for the sake of Allah, he would be rewarded by Allah. On the other hand, the complete determination to do something evil, even though Allah may not have allowed the person to fulfill that intent, is a sin because it meets the above conditions.[4]
- The one who gives a religious verdict gives that verdict based on the external evidence related to an issue. In general, it is not his role to determine what is the most pious path to follow. Instead, he must give the general ruling of permissibility and non-permissibility for all to follow. Therefore, his ruling that something is legal may not be satisfactory for the one trying to follow the approach of *taqwa* and fear of Allah. Al-Nawawi gives an example of a person receiving a gift from another person whose wealth is mostly from a forbidden source. The one receiving the gift may

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[1] The information about al-Daarimi was taken from the introduction to al-Daarimi, pp. ١-٥.

[2] Al-Nawawi, *Sharh al-Arbaeen*, p. 112.

[3] Cf., al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 196.

[4] Cf., al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 215.

not feel comfortable with that gift. The one making the legal ruling may look into the issue and conclude that such a gift is permissible to accept. However, the person himself may still not feel right with taking such a gift that could be derived from a forbidden source. Therefore, he should leave that gift.[1]

- At the end of his commentary on this hadith, al-Haitami makes an important general point regarding hadith as a whole. He states that if anyone wants to narrate or use as a proof any hadith from the collections that are known not to be all authentic, such as the *Sunan* collections, *Musnad* collections and so forth, and he is knowledgeable of the sciences of hadith, then it is not allowable for him to use such a hadith until he first determines if it is *sahih* or *hasan*. If the person is not knowledgeable of hadith, then he must first consult a scholar of hadith to find out if the hadith is indeed *sahih* or *hasan*. Otherwise, the person cannot use the hadith as he may be using something that is incorrect.[2]

Summary of the Hadith

- "The main or essential aspect of righteousness is good character." Or, "Righteousness is good character."
- Sin has a direct effect on a pious person's heart. It makes his soul uneasy and wavering.
- Another sign of sin is that a person dislikes to have people witness the act.
- A believer should consult his heart before performing a deed. If his heart feels uncomfortable about it, he should avoid it, even if the people give him verdicts that there is nothing wrong with the act.

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[1] Al-Nawawi, *Sharh al-Arbaeen*, pp. 112-113.

[2] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 218.

Hadith #28
“I advise you to have *taqwa*…”

عَنْ أَبِي نَجِيْحٍ الْعِرْبَاضِ بنِ سَارِيَةَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ وَعَظَنَا
رَسُوْلُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عليهِ وسلّم مَوْعِظَةً وَجلَتْ مِنْهَا
الْقُلُوبُ وَذَرَفَتْ مِنْهَا الْعُيُونُ فَقُلْنَا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ كَأَنَّهَا
مَوْعِظَةُ مُوَدِّعٍ فَأَوْصِنَا قَالَ أُوصِيكُمْ بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ وَ السَّمْعِ
وَالطَّاعَةِ وَإِنْ تَأَمَّرَ عَلَيْكُم عَبْدٌ فَإِنَّهُ مَنْ يَعِشْ مِنْكُمْ فَسَيَرَى
اخْتِلافًا كَثِيرًا فَعَلَيْكُمْ بِسُنَّتِي وَسُنَّةِ الْخُلَفَاءِ الرَّاشِدِينَ
الْمَهْدِيِّينَ عَضُّوا عَلَيْهَا بِالنَّوَاجِذِ وَإِيَّاكُمْ وَمُحْدَثَاتِ الأُمُورِ
فَإِنَّ كُلَّ بِدْعَةٍ ضَلالَةٌ

رَوَاهُ أَبُو دَاوُد وَالتِّرْمِذِيُّ وَقَالَ حَدِيْثٌ حَسَنٌ صَحِيْحٌ

On the authority of Abu Najeeh al-Irbaad ibn Saariyah (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) delivered an admonition that made our hearts fearful and our eyes tearful. We said, “O Messenger of Allah, it is as if it were a farewell admonition, so advise us.” He said, “I advise you to have *taqwa* of Allah and to listen and obey even if a slave is a leader over you. Certainly, the one who will live among you will see lots of differences. So stick to my sunnah and the sunnah of the right-principled and rightly-guided successors. Bite onto that with your molar teeth. And avoid newly-introduced matters. Verily, every heresy is a going astray.”

Recorded by Abu Daawood and by al-Tirmidhi who said, “It is a *hasan sahih* hadith.”

Selected Vocabulary

وعظنا	- “he admonished, exhorted, advised us”

موعظة - “an admonition,” see the discussion below
وجلت - “became fearful”
منها - “from it, due to it”
القلوب - “the hearts”
العيون - “the eyes”
مودع - “farewell”
أوصيكم - “I advise you” (plural)
السمع - “listen”
الطاعة - “obedience”
فسيرى - “he shall then see”
اختلاف - “differences”
كثير - “lots, many”
سنتي - “my sunnah, my way of life, my path”
الخلفاء - “successors”
الراشدين - the person who is راشد (*raashid*) is one who both knows the truth and follows it
المهديين - “the guided ones”
محدثات - “newly introduced things”
بدعة - “innovation, heresy”
ضلالة - “a going astray, misguidance”

Takhreej

This hadith is *sahih.* It was recorded, with slightly different wordings, by Ahmad, Abu Daawood,[1] al-Tirmidhi, ibn Hibbaan, ibn Abu Aasim, al-Baihaqi, al-Haakim and a number of others from al-Waleed ibn Muslim from Thaur ibn Yazeed from Khaalid ibn Madaan from both Abdul Rahmaan ibn Amr al-Sulami and Hujr ibn Hujr al-Kalaai from al-Irbaad. This chain is of *sahih* quality as all of the narrators are well-known trustworthy narrators.

This hadith is also recorded by al-Tirmidhi, ibn Maajah, al-Daarimi, al-Tabaraani and a host of others with the same chain but without mention of Hujr ibn Hujr.

Ahmad, ibn Maajah, al-Haakim and others record it from Muawiya ibn Saaleh from Dhamrah ibn Habeeb from Abdul Rahman ibn Amr from al-Irbaad.

Beyond the above, there are a number of different chains and corroborating chains for this hadith, as mentioned in detail by ibn Muhammad.[2]

According to ibn Muhammad, al-Albaani, al-Bazzaar, al-Tirmidhi, al-Haakim, ibn Abdul Barr, Abu Nuaim and numerous others, this is an authentic hadith.[3]

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[1] In the footnotes to ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh* (vol. 3, p. 329), it states that the hadith is recorded by Muslim, al-Tirmidhi and ibn Maajah. It seems clear that such is simply a typographical error, what the scholars of hadith would call *tasheef* (تصحيف), as the referred to chapter title and hadith number are clearly those of *Sunan Abu Daawood* and not *Sahih Muslim.*

[2] Ibn Muhammad, pp. 168-172.

[3] For particular references, see ibn Muhammad, p. 171.

In one of the narrations recorded by Ahmad and ibn Maajah, there is the following important additional wording,

قَدْ تَرَكْتُكُمْ عَلَى الْبَيْضَاءِ لَيْلُهَا كَنَهَارِهَا لا يَزِيغُ عَنْهَا بَعْدِي إِلاَّ هَالِكٌ

"I left you all on a clear matter, whose night is like its day [with respect to clarity]. No one strays from it after me but the destroyed one."

Note that in the English translation by Ibrahim and Johnson-Davies, the final words of the hadith are stated as being, "And every going astray is in the Hell-fire."[1] These words do not belong in this hadith. This is a case of *idraaj* or an incorrect insertion of words into the text of a hadith. The only Arabic edition of the al-Nawawi's *Forty Hadith* used by this author that contains those words is that published by Dar al-Mujtama entitled *Sharh Matin al-Arbaeen al-Nawawiya* with al-Nawawi's own comments. However, that edition is filled with mistakes.[2] In the commentary, there is no reference to these words. Hence, the mistake does not seem to come from al-Nawawi but from some of the publishers of the work. These words, though, do form part of another hadith, the hadith of *khutbah al-haajah*, as recorded by al-Nasaai.

General Comments About the Hadith

In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked to give final words of advice to his Companions. He then stated for them what leads to prosperity both in this life and the next. He laid down some important principles that will help protect one's religion when faced with new and different events after the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

About the Narrator: al-Irbaad ibn Saariyah

Al-Irbaad was one of the earliest people to embrace Islam. He described himself as one-fourth of Islam (that is, one out of only four Muslims). He was one of the *ahl al-Sufah*, the poor who lived in the Prophet's mosque. He was also known to be one of the people described in the Quran as crying when he had not the means to participate in jihad. He later lived in Greater Syria and resided in Hims. He died in the year 75 A.H.

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) delivered an admonition...

In the narration in *Sunan Abu Daawood*, it mentions that the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave a speech after the *Fajr* Prayer. It was the practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to speak to his followers on a regular basis during the Friday Prayers, Eid Prayers and so forth. However, he would also do so on other occasions. This example of the Prophet (peace be upon him) demonstrates that the regular occasions may not be sufficient. Instead, preachers must give more than that and the followers should eagerly desire more than that. On the other hand, as pointed out below, the Prophet (peace be upon him) would also take caution not to bore his followers with the teaching of the religion.

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[1] Ibrahim and Johnson-Davies, p. 96.

[2] In fact, it only has forty-one hadith in it instead of the forty-two that make up al-Nawawi's work.

In this hadith, it is specifically mentioned that the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave them a *mauidhah* (موعظة), translated as "admonition". Lane's *Lexicon* gives the following definition for *mauidhah*,

> He exhorted him, admonished him, or warned him; he put him in fear; he exhorted him to obedience; commanded him to obey; he gave him good advice, or counsel; and reminded him of the results of affairs; he reminded him by informing him of that which should make the heart tender; he reminded him of that which should soften his heart by the mention of reward and punishment.[1]

So, *mauidhah* involves reminding the person of the consequences of his actions. It includes reminding him of what his wrong actions will lead him to. It also includes, as the English expression states, "putting the fear of God in him" as well as making his heart soft and submissive to the truth.[2] This is clear from this hadith and how the Companions described the effect of that *mauidhah* upon them.

In other narrations, it describes the Prophet's admonition as being *baleegh* ("reaching"). In other words, it reached their hearts and conveyed the warning to them in a beautiful, understandable manner.[3] This is how an admonition should be. This is the way that the caller to Islam should convey the message. Allah says in the Quran,

وَعِظْهُمْ وَقُل لَّهُمْ فِىٓ أَنفُسِهِمْ قَوْلًۢا بَلِيغًا

"Admonish them and speak to them an effective word to reach their inner selves" (*al-Nisaa* 63).

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[1] Lane, vol. 2, p. 2953.

[2] This is a very important and essential aspect of calling people to Islam. Allah states, "Call unto the way of your Lord with the wisdom [of the Quran and sunnah] and fair exhortation..." (*al-Nahl* 125). It is obligatory upon the caller or preacher to make the listener realize what will be the results if he accepts the message as well as what will be the results if he rejects the message. If a caller only gives the first part, he has not truly conveyed the message. For more on this point, see the author's "Oft-Misunderstood Verses of the Quran (II)," *al-Basheer* (Vol. 6, No. 2, July-August 1992), pp. 3-6.

[3] Another meaning for the word *baleegh* is that the statements were made in a concise fashion and beautifully conveyed their meanings. However, al-Teebi says that this is not the meaning of the word here. Al-Teebi, vol. 2, p. 633.

One principle that is mentioned that makes the admonition more effective is keeping it from being too long or boring. It was the practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him), as mentioned in *Sahih Muslim*, to keep his speeches short and to the point. He would also choose the appropriate occasions and not bore the people with too many lectures and teachings. Al-Bukhari and Muslim record that Abdullah ibn Masood would give the people a reminder on every Thursday. When they requested he speak more often to them, he stated that the only thing that prevented him from doing so was the fear that they might get bored. Then he cited the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him) who was not overbearing with his speeches in order that they not get bored or tired with learning this religion.[1]

The Means to an Effective Speech

Al-Bugha and Mistu point out the conditions by which a person's speech will have the desired effect on the listeners.[2] These conditions are indirectly derived from the practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and some of them can be witnessed in this one hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

The first point is that the person must believe in his speech and be affected by it. In this way, he can transform that feeling to his listeners and convince them of what he is saying. When doing this, his expression will bear his conviction in what he is saying. This was the case with the Prophet (peace be upon him) whose face and overall demeanor would change when he was giving a speech. When delivering a sermon, he would be like a person earnestly warning his people about a coming army.

Second, the speaker's heart must be free of disease and filth. The speech that is coming from a pure and sincere heart will flow over to the listeners. Many times, believers can pick up the falseness of a person's heart when he speaks. Al-Hasan al-Basri once heard a speaker in the mosque whose speech had no effect on al-Hasan. Afterwards, he went to the speaker and told him, "There is either a disease in your heart or in my heart."

Third, the person's speech must be followed up by action. In general, the people who listen to his speech will watch his deeds. If his deeds do not correspond to his words, it is a sign that he does not believe in his own words or he was just trying to fool the audience.

The Description of the Believers

The narrator mentioned that the Prophet's words, "made our hearts fearful and our eyes tearful." This shows that what they were taught effected them. Teaching is not simply a matter of conveying "dry" laws and regulations. Beyond that, what is needed is what affects the heart and what is related to their lives. It should go to the very soul of the listener.

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[1] Cf., al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 199.

[2] Al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 200.

A key to having such an effect is the use of the revelation of Allah in one's speech. Some people who are speakers today rarely quote the Quran or hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him). For this reason, they often have very little or no effect on their listeners.

On the other hand, when speaking to true believers, the admonition that contains Quranic verses and hadith will definitely affect their hearts and move their souls. The hearts become fearful and the eyes begin to tear. This is one of the signs of the true believers, as can be seen in the example noted here from the time of the Companions. Also, Allah describes the believers in the following way,

إِنَّمَا ٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ ٱلَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ ٱللَّهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ
ءَايَـٰتُهُۥ زَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَـٰنًا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ﴿٢﴾ ٱلَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ
وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَـٰهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ ﴿٣﴾ أُوْلَـٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ حَقًّا ۚ لَّهُمْ دَرَجَـٰتٌ عِندَ
رَبِّهِمْ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ

"The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, feel a fear in their hearts and when His verses are recited unto them, they increase their faith, and they put their trust in their Lord (alone), who perform the prayers and spend out of that which We have bestowed upon them. It is they who are truly the believers. For them are grades of dignity and a generous provision" (*al-Anfaal* 2-4).

Allah also says,

ٱللَّهُ نَزَّلَ أَحْسَنَ ٱلْحَدِيثِ كِتَـٰبًا مُّتَشَـٰبِهًا مَّثَانِىَ تَقْشَعِرُّ مِنْهُ جُلُودُ ٱلَّذِينَ
يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ ثُمَّ تَلِينُ جُلُودُهُمْ وَقُلُوبُهُمْ إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ ٱللَّهِ ۚ

"Allah has sent down the best speech, a Book, its parts resembling each other and oft-repeated. The skins of those who fear their Lord shiver from it [when they recite it or hear it recited]. Then their skins and their hearts soften to the remembrance of Allah" (*al-Zumar* 23).

Every believer should try to examine himself in the light of these verses and examples. Does the Quran have such an effect on his heart? Does he begin to fear Allah when he hears the Quran? Do his eyes begin to cry thinking about what he has done and how he will have to meet Allah in the Hereafter? The above verses give some of the clear signs of being a true believer. These aspects should occur at least sometimes for the true believer. If a person never possesses these characteristics, it is a sign that his faith may be lacking.

"It is as if it were a farewell admonition, so advise us."

It seems that in this particular address to the people, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was more enthusiastic or more informative than on other occasions. For that reason, they felt it may be a farewell address. This is because in a farewell address the person would try to summarize everything that he feels is important to the audience and he would not leave anything out of his speech. The person realizes that he will not have another chance to add or correct anything in what he said.[1]

When they felt that it could be a farewell admonition, they requested the Prophet (peace be upon him) to advise them. In other words, they were looking for some important advice that they could apply in their lives after the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

The Prophet (peace be upon him) responded to their request. This aspect adds to the importance of this hadith. The Prophet (peace be upon him) is giving them some final words of advice that would guide them after his death. The message he gave them was directly for their situation and, by analogy, for everyone who has come afterwards. It is an advice that will help the person stay on the Straight Path without straying.

"I advise you to have *taqwa* of Allah"

The first words of advice that the Prophet (peace be upon him) told the people in response to their request was "have *taqwa* of Allah." This is also the first bit of advice that he told Muaadh ibn Jabal in Hadith Number 18. The concept of *taqwa* was discussed in detail in the commentary to that hadith. Here, it should suffice to say that the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave the advice that has been given to all of mankind and all of the messengers. Allah says,

وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِى ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَمَا فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ ۗ وَلَقَدْ وَصَّيْنَا ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا۟ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ مِن
قَبْلِكُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ أَنِ ٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ ۚ

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[1] Ibn Rajab points out that this is why the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered the people to pray as if it were the final, farewell prayer. If they had no chance to pray again afterwards, they would do their best to perfect and complete the present prayer. Ibn Rajab also states that it is possible that the Prophet (peace be upon him) implied in the speech that he gave that it may be a farewell speech to them. See ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, pp. 114-5.

"To Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. We have advised the people of the Scripture before you and you also [O Muslims] to have *taqwa* of Allah [fear Allah and keep your duty to Him]" (*al-Nisaa* 131).

In particular, *taqwa* is the absolute key to one's well-being in the Hereafter. Hence, the Prophet (peace be upon him) began this advice by reminding the people of what is the most essential characteristic for the most important of the two lives, that of this world and that of the Hereafter.

"to listen and obey"

Obviously, obeying Muslim rulers is part of the *taqwa* that the Prophet (peace be upon him) advised the people to have in the first statement. One way of understanding this phrase is to see it as stating a particular aspect after mentioning it in a general connotation. This is done to stress the importance of the particular aspect.

However, another way of looking at it is to consider the two concepts to be referring to different aspects in the intent of the speaker. In this case, for example, after mentioning the key aspect to well-being in the Hereafter, the Prophet (peace be upon him) also mentioned one of the key aspects to well-being in this world.[1]

Furthermore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) mentioned both listening and obeying. These two terms could be referring to different concepts. The first implies turning to the authorities, listening to them properly and making sure that one understands what they are ordering. After that process is done, the order is implemented and obeyed. Another way of understanding, "listen and obey," is that the word "obey" simply emphasizes what is already captured in the first statement to "listen."[2] But the generally accepted rule is that if the words can be understood to mean different aspects, this takes precedence over considering one simply an emphasis of the other.[3]

The Importance of Obedience to Those in Authority

Without obedience to the proper authorities, there will be anarchy, chaos and civil strife. However, with proper obedience, there can be peace and unity. Hence, the Prophet (peace be upon him) covered both this life and the Hereafter in this first portion of his advice.

A Muslim must listen to and obey the ruler. The meaning of "obedience" here is that the Muslim responds and submits to what has been ordered or prohibited by the ruler without any disputation or resistance, regardless of whether what was ordered is in accord with what he likes or not, as long as it was not an act of disobedience to Allah.[1]

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[1] Cf., al-Haitami, *Fath*, pp. 219-220.

[2] Cf., al-Mudaabaghi, pp. 219-220.

[3] Cf., al-Harbi, vol. 2, pp. 473-480.

Listening and obeying the rightful ruler is one of the fundamental principles of Islam. In his famous statement of the Islamic creed, al-Tahaawi wrote,

> We do not believe in revolt against our leaders and rulers, even if they commit injustice, nor do we supplicate against them or defy their orders. On the contrary, we believe that obedience to them is a duty and a part of our obligatory obedience to Allah so long as they do not order anything sinful. We pray for their safety and piety.[2]

There are numerous evidences in the Quran and sunnah to support the conclusion of al-Tahaawi.[3] For example, Allah says,

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓا۟ أَطِيعُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا۟ ٱلرَّسُولَ وَأُو۟لِى ٱلْأَمْرِ مِنكُمْ

"O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger, and those charged with authority among you" (*al-Nisaa* 59).

The two *Sahih*s also have the hadith that the Prophet (peace be on him) said,

عَلَى الْمَرْءِ الْمُسْلِمِ السَّمْعُ وَالطَّاعَةُ فِيمَا أَحَبَّ وَكَرِهَ إِلاَّ أَنْ يُؤْمَرَ بِمَعْصِيَةٍ فَإِنْ أُمِرَ
بِمَعْصِيَةٍ فَلا سَمْعَ وَلا طَاعَةَ

"It is the duty of every Muslim to hear and obey whether he likes it or not, except when he is asked to do something sinful. In that case there is no listening nor obedience."

Umar ibn al-Khattaab is reported to have said, "There is no Islam without community (*jamaah*). And there is no community without a leader. And there is no leader without obedience."[4]

This obedience to the ruler is not only if the ruler is a pious and just ruler. Even if the ruler is not the best person, if he is in a place of authority, he should be obeyed. One cannot use the fact that he is not a pious person to refuse to obey him. This point can also be proven by numerous hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him). For example, the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated,

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[1] Cf., Abdullah al-Tiraiqi, *Taah Oola al-Amr* (Riyadh: Daar al-Muslim, 1994), p. 9.
[2] Ibn Abu al-Izz, vol. 2, p. 540.
[3] For a thorough discussion, see Abdullah al-Dumaiji, *al-Imaamah al-Udhma ind Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah* (Riyadh: Daar Taibah, 1987), pp. 375-381.
[4] Quoted in al-Dumaiji, p. 375.

مَنْ رَأَى مِنْ أَمِيرِهِ شَيْئًا يَكْرَهُهُ فَلْيَصْبِرْ عَلَيْهِ فَإِنَّهُ مَنْ فَارَقَ الْجَمَاعَةَ شِبْرًا فَمَاتَ إِلاَّ
مَاتَ مِيتَةً جَاهِلِيَّةً

"If anyone of you finds a thing in his ruler of which he does not approve, he should bear it patiently. For one who moves a span's length from the *Jama'ah* (community) and dies, dies the death of the Days of Ignorance (*Jaahiliyah*)." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

Ibn Abu al-Izz has explained the wisdom behind not revolting against a ruler who is impious:

> As to the rule that we should obey those in authority even if they are unjust, it is because the evil that will result from revolting against them will be many times more than the evil which results from their injustice. In fact, by patiently bearing their injustice we atone for many of our misdeeds and add to our rewards, for Allah has only inflicted them upon us on account of our misdeeds. The rule is that the recompense of an act is in accordance with the act itself. Hence our duty in such situations is to strive in repenting, seeking forgiveness and rectifying our behavior. Allah says, "Whatever misfortune happens to you is because of the things your hands have wrought, and for many of them He grants forgiveness" (*al-Shoora* 30); "What! When a single disaster smites you, although you smote (your enemies) with one twice as great, do you say: 'Whence is this?' Say to them: It is from yourselves" (*ali-Imraan* 165); "Whatever good (o men!) happens to you is from Allah: but whatever evil happens to you, is from your (own) selves" (*al-Nisaa* 79); and, "Thus do We make the wrongdoers turn to each other, because of what they earn" (*al-Anaam* 129). Hence, if the people want to get rid of the injustice of an unjust ruling, they should themselves abstain from doing wrong.[1]

This does not mean that the populace needs to sit quietly and do nothing while injustice is occurring. It is a duty upon the Muslims to advise or make *naseehah* to their ruler. They must work to change the wrong given their abilities. They are not allowed, of course, to do anything that leads to greater harm than what currently exists.[2]

In fact, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was once asked what is the most virtuous jihad and he answered,

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[1] Ibn Abu al-Izz, vol. 2, p. 543.

[2] Cf., al-Tiraiqi, *Taah*, p. 52.

كَلِمَةُ حَقٍّ عِنْدَ سُلْطَانٍ جَائِرٍ

"A statement of truth in the presence of an unjust ruler."[1]

Manifestation of Obedience to the Ruler

If the ruler orders the Muslims to do what is already a religious obligation, then they must obey him. There is no scholarly disagreement on that point.

It could be the case that a ruler orders the people to do what is religiously recommended but not obligatory. Similarly, he may forbid them something that is religiously disliked but not forbidden. For example, the ruler might order some Muslims to build a school or prohibit them from having large, extravagant gatherings for their weddings and so forth. What should be the response in such a case? In this case also, says al-Tiraiqi, one is obliged to obey the ruler and such deeds fall under the rights of the ruler.[2]

What if the ruler orders the Muslims to do something which the religion calls simply permissible, and not obligatory or recommended? What if the ruler prohibits the Muslims from something that is permissible according to the *shareeah*, and neither forbidden nor disliked? Suppose, for example, that the ruler requires the populous to follow specific laws regarding driving and traffic. Another example would be the ruler laying down laws concerning the maximum work week and so forth.

On this point, there is some difference of opinion. Some scholars say that there is no obedience in such matters because no one has the right to prohibit what Allah has permitted or make obligatory something that Allah has stated to be simply permitted. Other scholars say that in such a case, the ruler must be obeyed as these acts are all part of the *maroof* (good, recognized, approved of acts) concerning which the Muslim must obey the ruler. A third opinion is that, if the person is hurt by obeying such laws, he obeys them openly but need not obey them privately. A fourth view is that the ruler must be obeyed in such matters if the act is in accord with the *shareeah* and there is benefit to the Muslims in doing such. A fifth view is that of ibn Taimiya where he distinguishes between a just ruler and a non-just ruler. He says that one must obey the just ruler in any act that one does not know to be a sin. However, in the case of an unjust ruler, one obeys him only in the acts that he knows to be righteous acts, such as jihad.

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[1] Recorded by al-Nasaai, Ahmad and ibn Maajah. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 1, p. 248. Al-Qaari explains why such a jihad is the best jihad. He states that the tyranny of the ruler extends to all of his citizenry, which can be a great number. Therefore, keeping him from his tyranny will benefit numbers of people as opposed to killing a disbeliever. See al-Qaari, vol. 7, p. 222.

[2] Al-Tiraiqi, *Taah*, p. 24.

It seems, Allah knows best, that the strongest opinion is that the ruler must be obeyed when he orders the permissible acts, as it is to be assumed that these laws are in the best interest of the Muslims. If, however, these laws are simply a means to something forbidden, then the ruler is not to be obeyed. If the ruler prohibits certain people to do certain permissible acts for some overriding benefit, then they must obey him in that matter. However, if the ruler lays down a general law prohibiting something that is permissible, then he is not to be obeyed because, in that case, he is laying down a law other than that of the *shareeah.* These are al-Tiraiqi's conclusions[1] and they are sound. On the last point, though, one must add the following: When the ruler prohibits something that is normally permissible and he is supported in his decision by other principles of the *shareeah,* such as acting on behalf of the general welfare of the people, then his decision must be obeyed and followed.

Obedience to the Rulers is Not Absolute

The obedience to the ruler in Islam is not absolute. There is always an authority that is above the ruler. That authority is Allah. It is not permissible to obey the ruler in any act which is disobedience to Allah. Commenting on the verse just quoted, *surah al-Nisaa* 59, ibn Abu al-Izz wrote,

> The Book and the Sunnah prove that obedience to those in authority (*uli l-amr*) is obligatory so long as they do not order anything unlawful. Allah has said, "Obey Allah, and obey His Messenger and those in authority among you" (*al-Nisaa* 59). Look at these words. He said, "Obey the Messenger", but he did not say, "Obey those in authority from among you", because they do not command independent obedience. They are to be obeyed only in what is obedience to Allah and His Messenger. Allah has repeated the word "obey" in the case of the Messenger (peace be on him), because one who obeys him obeys Allah, since he never orders what is against the obedience to Allah. In fact, he never gives a wrong order, he is protected from doing such a thing. But those in authority may order what goes against Allah's commands, hence obedience to them is conditional upon obedience to Allah and His Messenger.[2]

The ending of the hadith quoted above also makes that point very clear,

فَإِنْ أُمِرَ بِمَعْصِيَةٍ فَلا سَمْعَ وَلا طَاعَةَ

"When he is asked to do something sinful, he should not hear nor obey."

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[1] Al-Tiraiqi, *Taah*, pp. 25-27.

[2] Ibn Abu al-Izz, vol. 2, pp. 542-543.

In an important passage, ibn Taimiya also wrote,

> They [the *ahl al-sunnah al-jamaah*] do not allow the obedience to the ruler in everything he orders. They do not require obedience to him except in what the *shareeah* has made permissible for him to be obeyed in. It is not allowed to obey him in matters of disobedience to Allah, even if he is a just ruler. If he orders the people to obey Allah, they obey him. For example, if he orders them to establish the prayer, pay the zakat, be honest and just, make the hajj and jihad for the sake of Allah [they obey him]. In reality, they are obeying Allah. And if a disbeliever or an evil-doer orders what is an act of obedience to Allah, that does not make that act forbidden. Indeed, the obligation to fulfill that obligation is not dropped simply because the order came from an evildoer. In the same way, if [the evildoer] speaks the truth, it is not allowed to belie him. The obligation to follow the truth is not dropped simply because that truth has come from an evildoer.[1]

Al-Dumaiji points out that this means that this important act of obedience to the ruler is not one of blind obedience. It is not, he says, the kind of obedience that is taught in the military or among the Sufi groups.[2] Instead, one must look to see what has been ordered. One must study it to see if it is an act of disobedience to Allah or not. If it is clearly an act of disobedience, then one has no option except to refuse such a command. If it is not a clear act of disobedience or if it is a matter of difference in *ijtihaad*, then the ruler has the right to be obeyed in what he has ordered.[3] Ibn Taimiya states that one must first have knowledge that what is being ordered is not an act of disobedience to Allah before he fulfills the commands of those in authority.[4]

Ibn Uthaimeen states that if a ruler orders people to do what is forbidden, they should openly disobey him and not be concerned with that matter. But, he points out, this does not mean that he is not to be obeyed in the other orders that he has commanded. If he is the rightful ruler, he is not to be obeyed in anything which is disobedience to Allah but he is to be obeyed in other matters.[5]

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[1] Quoted in al-Dumaiji, p. 393.

[2] Today, there are many who take *baiah* or the oath of allegiance from others. They think that this oath requires blind and unqestioned obedience from those who make that pledge. However, such is never the case in Islam. Obedience is always conditioned by the fact that the follower must know that the action he is told to do is sanctioned or permitted in the *shareeah.*

[3] Al-Dumaiji, p. 390.

[4] Ibn Taimiya, *Majmoo*, vol. 10, p. 267.

[5] Ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 3, p. 333.

"even if a slave is a leader over you."

Many of the narrations of this hadith explicitly mention an "Abyssinian slave". This emphasizes not only that he is a slave but also that he is not from the tribe of the Quraish or an Arab. This must have had a strong impact upon the listeners at the time when the Prophet (peace be upon him) said this.

This particular portion of the hadith has been interpreted in three different ways. There seems to be a widespread agreement that it is impermissible for a slave to be the ruler or leader. This is because a slave is not able to act freely but must obey his master. Hence, he is not qualified to be a leader and, in reality, he would not be the leader but his master would.[1] For that reason, scholars have differed as to the exact meaning of this phrase.

The first approach is that of al-Khattaabi. According to him, this phrase is meant only to emphasize the importance of obeying anyone that the ruler appoints in a position of authority, even if that person be an Abyssinian slave.[2] It does not mean, he says, that it is permissible for the ruler to be a slave or that such would be the case. This is because the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated,

الأَئِمَّةُ مِنْ قُرَيْشٍ

"The rulers are to be [from the tribe of] Quraish."[3] Al-Khattaabi further states that a person may cite an impossible hypothetical case to stress the meaning of what he is stating. Al-Khattaabi gives the example of another hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

مَنْ بَنَى مَسْجِدًا لِلَّهِ كَمَفْحَصِ قَطَاةٍ أَوْ أَصْغَرَ بَنَى اللَّهُ لَهُ بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ

"Whoever builds a mosque for the sake of Allah like the size of a pigeon's nest or smaller, Allah will build for him a house in Paradise."[4] Obviously, a mosque cannot be that. The statement is meant to stress the importance of building a mosque in the same way that the hadith here is simply emphasizing the importance of obeying the one whom the ruler puts in charge.[5]

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[1] For more on this point, see al-Dumaiji, pp. 240-243.

[2] He starts by saying this and then he moves on to emphasize the impossibility of what is stated in the hadith. For this reason, his interpretation must be considered different from the fourth interpretation mentioned later.

[3] Recorded by Ahmad. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 1, p. 535.

[4] Recorded by ibn Maajah and Ahmad. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 1056. However, another interpretation of this hadith is not that it is an exaggeration but it refers to building or contributing to even just a small portion of a mosque.

[5] Al-Khattaabi is quoted in Muhammad al-Adheemabaadi, *Aoon al-Mabood Sharh Sunan Abi Daawood* (Cairo: Maktaba ibn Taimiya, 1987), vol. 12, pp. 359-360. Ibn Daqeeq al-Eid (*Sharh*,

This is the view favored by the following commentators: al-Teebi,[1] Adheemabaadi,[2] al-Sahaaranfoori[3] and al-Mubaarakfoori.[4] Ibn al-Arabi states that such is the approach of "our scholars," apparently referring to the Maliki scholars, although he himself does not agree with that interpretation.[5]

A second approach is that of ibn al-Arabi. He says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was referring to the time when things would not be in proper order. The affairs would become so bad that slaves would become rulers over the people. In that case, a Muslim should remain patient, listen to and obey the ruler. If one does not do so, it may lead to lots of civil strife and evil. Hence, he must remain patient until Allah changes the situation.[6] Although he mentions some of the other views, this seems to be the view that ibn Rajab favors.[7]

A third approach is mentioned by al-Qaari. He states that no matter who the ruler is, one should listen and obey him. In other words, in this interpretation, the stress is on ignoring the rulers' lineage or class. One does not have the right to disobey the ruler simply because he is of a lower class or of a lineage that a person does not like.[8]

Ibn Uthaimeen's commentary is very close to this but may be considered a fourth interpretation. He says that the ruler must be obeyed even if he is an Abyssinian slave. This is true regardless if he be a general ruler, a ruler over a specific group of people, a ruler over a tribe or anything of that nature. He says that those people are mistaken who say the Abyssinian slave refers to any type of ruler other than the general ruler or head of state. He says that the wording applies to any sort of authority or rule. He says that no matter who Allah places in authority, he must be obeyed, otherwise there would be anarchy and civil strife.[9]

In this author's opinion, all of the above interpretations are plausible. It is difficult to determine which has the most credence.

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p. 75), al-Haitami (*Fath*, p. 220), al-Bugha and Mistu (pp. 201-202), Sultaan (p. 251) and Taataay (p. 246) also mention this interpretation as one of two possible meanings to the hadith.

[1] Al-Teebi, vol. 2, p. 634.

[2] Adheemabaadi, *Aun*, vol. 12, pp. 359-360. He simply quotes al-Khattaabi without making any additional comment.

[3] Khaleel al-Sahaaranfoori, *Badl al-Majhood fi Hall Abi Daawood* (Beirut: Daar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, n.d.), vol. 18, p. 147. He also simply quotes al-Khattaabi without making any additional comment.

[4] Al-Mubaarakfoori, *Tuhfah*, vol. 7, p. 439. He also simply quotes al-Khattaabi without making any additional comment.

[5] Ibn al-Arabi, vol. 10, p. 149.

[6] Ibn al-Arabi, vol. 10, p. 149. Ibn Daqeeq al-Eid (*Sharh*, p. 75), al-Haitami (*Fath*, p. 220), al-Bugha and Mistu (pp. 201-202), Sultaan (p. 251) and Taataay (p. 246) mention this as one of two possible meanings.

[7] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, pp. 118-119.

[8] Al-Qaari, vol. 1, p. 241.

[9] Ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 3, pp. 331-332. Al-Baitaar (p. 169) has something similar to that.

"Certainly, the one who will lives [1] among you will see lots of differences."

This is one of the miracles accorded the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Allah had given him the foreknowledge of many events to come. On most occasions, the Prophet (peace be upon him) would convey that information in a general sense. For particular Companions, though, he gave specific details of what would occur. This was true, for example, with respect to Hudhaifah and Abu Huraira.[2]

In this hadith, the Prophet said فسيرى (*fasayara*); this implies that it will be seen in the future. Another way to state the future would be to use the word, سوف (*saufa*). The difference between the two is that the way the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated it implies that it will occur soon. Such was the case, for the Muslim community began to face its first trials and differences after the assassination of Uthmaan.[3]

Ibn Uthaimeen points out that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said that there would be lots of differences. He says this applies to differences concerning the rule, opinions, beliefs, the general and specific situation of people and so forth. These problems began to occur during the lifetime of many of those to whom the Prophet (peace be upon him) was speaking.[4]

The differences became great indeed. Muslims started fighting one another. Muslims started declaring that other Muslims were no longer within the fold of Islam and so forth. These kinds of differences and conflicts can lead to a great deal of confusion if a person cannot find his way out of such conflicts. By the mercy of Allah, Allah did not leave the Muslims without a guide and clear path (sunnah) that would lead them to the truth.

But then ibn Uthaimeen goes on to pose the following question: Is what the Prophet (peace be upon him) said here only relevant to the people he was talking to at that time or is it relevant to everybody at all times? He concludes that it is relevant to all peoples at all times. Ibn Uthaimeen states that, "those among us who lived a long time find a great difference between the beginning of their lives and the ending of their lives." He says that anyone who lives a long life will see a lot of changes in the people. Therefore, in this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was giving a lesson that is valuable to everyone who lives and sees such changes. What should a Muslim do in the face of those changes? Where is the key that will guide him to what is right? The key is in following the sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and that of the rightly-guided successors, as shall be discussed below.[5]

The message that the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated in this hadith and the guide to surviving the differences that will occur and have occurred is very similar to what the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated in another well-known hadith. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

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[1] Some narrations state, "among you who lives after me".
[2] Cf., ibn al-Arabi, vol. 10, p. 146; al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 220.
[3] Cf., al-Mudaabaghi, p. 220.
[4] Ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 3, p. 334.
[5] Ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 3, p. 337.

إِنَّ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ تَفَرَّقَتْ عَلَى ثِنْتَيْنِ وَسَبْعِينَ مِلَّةً وَتَفْتَرِقُ أُمَّتِي عَلَى ثَلاثٍ وَسَبْعِينَ مِلَّةً
كُلُّهُمْ فِي النَّارِ إِلاَّ مِلَّةً وَاحِدَةً قَالُوا وَمَنْ هِيَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ مَا أَنَا عَلَيْهِ وَأَصْحَابِي

"The Tribes of Israel broke up into seventy-two sects. My Nation will break up into seventy-three sects. All of those sects will be in the Hell-fire except one group." They said, "Who are they, O Messenger of Allah?" He answered, "[Those who follow] what I and my Companions are following."[1]

"So stick to my sunnah"

In the face of all of the different views, opinions and groups, one must turn to the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) if one wants to be rescued from the confusion that exists. If one ignores all of the different voices and sticks to the way of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his rightly-guided successors, one will be safe. One will then not even have to worry about all of the different opinions being bandied about. The person will know where to find the truth and he will be able to follow it.

The word "sunnah" means, "way of life, pattern of behavior, path." It also means, "the clear path".[2] It encompasses beliefs, manners, deeds, manner of worship and statements. All of these are included in the word sunnah. Hence, sticking to the sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) means that one ensures that his beliefs, manners, deeds and statements are consistent with those of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). According to ibn Rajab, the early scholars used the term "sunnah" only if it encompassed all these aspects. In other words, a person cannot be considered as truly following the way of the sunnah unless he is following the Prophet (peace be upon him) in all of those different aspects.[3]

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[1] The wording above is from al-Tirmidhi. The hadith has been recorded by many compilers. According to al-Albaani, it is *hasan* with this wording. See al-Albaani's footnotes to ibn Abu al-Izz, p. 260.

[2] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 220. The word sunnah is also used by the jurists to mean a deed which is praiseworthy and to be rewarded but it falls short of being obligatory. Ibn al-Arabi points out that he knows of no instance of the word being used in that sense in any of the texts of the Quran or hadith, except for the hadith, "Whoever prays twelve *rakat*s of sunnah [daily], Allah will build for him a house in Paradise." See ibn al-Arabi, vol. 10, pp. 145-146.

[3] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 120.

“and the sunnah of the right-principled and rightly-guided successors.”

The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentioned his own sunnah and then mentioned the sunnah of his rightly-guided successors. These successors are called *raashideen* because they know the truth and they judge or act in accordance with it. *Raashid* (راشد) is the opposite of *ghaawa* (غاوى). *Ghaawa* implies recognizing the truth but not following it.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also described them as *mahdiyeen.* This means that Allah has guided them to the truth and has not led them astray from it. This is the opposite of *dhaal* (ضال) or one who is astray from the truth and does not know the truth.

For these successors to be true examples for others to follow, it is a must that they had to have recognized the truth, were guided and followed it. Otherwise, they are not worthy of being followed.[1]

Who are the “Rightly-Guided Successors”?

Most of the commentators on this hadith state that the term “rightly-guided successors” is a reference to Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthmaan and Ali, who were the leaders of the Muslim community after the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him). The Prophet (peace be upon him) knew that they would follow his teachings and his way. Hence, he guided his followers to follow their path.

The proof for that position is the hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him),

الْخِلافَةُ فِي أُمَّتِي ثَلاثُونَ سَنَةً ثُمَّ مُلْكٌ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ

“The successorship (*khilaafah*) will last for thirty years among my Nation and then there will be a kingship after that.”[2] When one adds up the terms of Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthmaan and Ali, the total comes to thirty years. The *khilaafah* of Abu Bakr was for two years and three months, the *khilaafah* of ‘Umar was for ten and a half years, the *khilaafah* of ‘Uthmaan was for twelve years, the *khilaafah* of ‘Ali was for four years and nine months.[3]

There are hadith that talk about the *khilaafah* in a more general sense, for they include other than the aforementioned Companions. Those hadith make it clear that the *khilaafah* in general was for more than thirty years. Hence, these thirty years of these Companions are something special in the sense of *khilaafah*. Their special aspect is that they were headed by the rightly-guided successors as mentioned by the Prophet (peace be upon him).

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[1] Cf., al-Rasheed, p. 342.

[2] The above wording is that of al-Tirmidhi. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih.* See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 1, p. 630.

[3] At the end of this list, some also include the *khilaafah* of al-Hasan that lasted only six months.

The opinion that the referred-to rightly-guided successors are Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthmaan and Ali is the opinion of al-Tahaawi, al-Nawawi, ibn al-Arabi, ibn Daqeeq al-Eid, al-Teebi, al-Alaai, ibn Rajab, ibn Abu al-Izz, al-Mubaarakfoori, Suhaaranfoori, al-Rasheed, al-Salmaan, al-Bugha and Mistu, and Sultaan.[1] Ibn al-Arabi, ibn Daqeeq al-Eid and Al-Alaai claim that there is a consensus on this point. Al-Haitami explicitly mentions the four and adds al-Hasan as the fifth.[2]

It should also be noted that of the four rightly-guided caliphs, Abu Bakr and Umar have a distinction apart from the other two. The Prophet (peace be on him) enjoined Muslims to follow the ways (*sunnah*) of the right-principled caliphs, but he asked Muslims to specifically imitate only two of them, Abu Bakr and ‘Umar. He said,

اقْتَدُوا بِاللَّذَيْنِ مِنْ بَعْدِي أَبِي بَكْرٍ وَعُمَرَ

“Imitate those two who come after me, Abu Bakr and Umar.”[3] There is a difference between following one’s ways (*ittiba sunnati-hi*) and imitating him (*iqtida bihi*), which gives a greater weight to their acts. The status of Abu Bakr and ‘Umar, then, is greater than the status of ‘Uthmaan and Ali, may Allah be pleased with them all.

The Legal Status of the Four Rightly-Guided Caliphs

If the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered Muslims to stick to the path of the rightly-guided successors and assuming that such is in reference to Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthmaan and Ali, what is the status of their rulings and opinions from a legal theory point of view? Does one have to follow their opinions and *ijtihaad*? If they all agree on a matter, does that mean that their agreement must be followed?[4]

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[1] Al-Nawawi, *Sharh Matn al-Arbaeen*, p. 115; ibn al-Arabi, vol. 10, p. 146; ibn Daqeeq al-Eid, *Sharh*, p. 75; al-Teebi, vol. 2, p. 634; Khaleel al-Alaai, *Ijmaal al-Isaabah fi Aqwaal al-Sahaabah* (Kuwait: Jameeah Ihyaa al-Turaath al-Islaami, 1987), p. 49; ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 122; al-Tahaawi and ibn Abu al-Izz in *Sharh al-Aqeedah al-Tahaawiya*, vol. 2, p. 726; al-Mubaarakfoori, vol. 7, p. 441; Suhaaranfoori, vol. 18, p. 147; al-Rasheed, p. 342; Abdul Azeez al-Salmaan, *al-Kawaashif al-Jaliyyah an Maani al-Waasitiyah* (1981), p. 748; al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 202; Sultaan p. 253. Ibn Rajab also points out that some people include Umar ibn Abdul Azeez as the fifth of the rightly-guided caliphs.

[2] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 220.

[3] Recorded by al-Tirmidhi, ibn Maajah and Ahmad. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 1, p. 254.

[4] There is a difference of opinion concerning the authority of the statement of a Companion of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in general. There are eight different views concerning that issue: (1) The statement of a Companion is a proof and authority, unconditionally; (2) The statement of a Companion is unconditionally not a proof or authority; (3) The statement of the four caliphs only is a proof or authority; (4) The statement of Abu Bakr or Umar only is an authority; (5) The statement of the four caliphs and others similar to them in virtue only is an authority; (6) The

It is known that, in general, Umar would follow the practice of Abu Bakr. Similarly, Uthmaan would follow the practice of his two predecessors. Ali was also very careful in following the decrees of Umar. The later caliph Umar ibn Abdul Azeez said clearly that no one should stray from their paths.[1] There is no doubt that the four rightly-guided caliphs were very pious and very knowledgeable. Thus, their opinions should be highly respected and not taken lightly. The question here is whether or not one must or should follow their opinions as opposed to following the opinions of others, say of other Companions, for example.

Al-Alaai points out that some people say that if the four caliphs agree upon something, it is to be considered a consensus and it is not allowed for anyone to differ from that opinion. Al-Alaai states that such is not correct and he goes on to refute that particular view.[2] Al-Namlah points out that such cannot be considered a consensus if any of the other Companions disagreed with them. However, if none of the other Companions disagreed with the four caliphs, then it is not a matter of the four caliphs agreement being a consensus but it now becomes a matter of the consensus of the Companions, which is a different issue.[3]

The Companions themselves sometimes differed with the four caliphs. Indeed, the four caliphs sometimes differed from each other and did not always follow the opinions of their prede-cessors.[4] This is a sign that the Companions themselves did not consider the statements of the four caliphs or of any of them as a final authority in Islamic law.

Even those who would accept their statements as authority, based on this hadith, state that simply because their statement is an authority, it does not mean that it has the same rank as the sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself. Not everything which is an authority in Islamic law is of the same status or strength. Hence, if there is any conflict between what any of these four caliphs said and what the Prophet (peace be upon him) said or did, then the Prophet's sunnah would definitely take precedence.[5]

The question is more related to cases where the four caliphs did something that was not in contradiction to the Prophet's sunnah although it did not particularly form part of the Prophet's sunnah. In this case, is the statement or practice of the rightly-guided successors necessary to be followed?

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statement of the first three caliphs only is an authority; (7) The statement of a Companion is an authority only if it is in agreement with analogy; (8) The statement of a Companion is an authority only when it contradicts analogy. See al-Namlah, vol. 4, pp. 274-275; also see al-Alaai, *Ijmaal*, *passim.* Obviously, those who say that the statement of any Companion is unconditionally an authority will have no problem in saying that the statement of any of the four rightly-guided caliphs is an authority.

[1] Quoted in ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 123.

[2] Al-Alaai, *Ijmaal*, p. 47.

[3] Al-Namlah, vol. 4, p. 99.

[4] For examples, see al-Alaai, *Ijmaal*, p. 48.

[5] Cf., al-Alaai, *Ijmaal*, p. 49.

Many of the commentators on this hadith understand the guidance given here in a qualified or restricted sense. Ibn al-Arabi and ibn Daqeeq al-Eid, for example, understood this hadith to mean that if a person is not a knowledgeable person, then, if he must blindly follow somebody else's opinion, he should follow the opinion of one of the four rightly-guided caliphs. They state, furthermore, that if there is a difference of opinion among the Companions, then more weight is to be given to the opinions of the four caliphs, based on this hadith.[1]

Suhaaranfoori also says that this hadith is evidence that if one of the four rightly-guided caliphs held an opinion and other Companions differed with him, the opinion of the rightly-guided caliph would take precedence.[2] He does not go on to say anything beyond that conclusion.

Al-Shaukaani is one scholar who has taken this hadith to its furthest conclusion. He has, in essence, equated the sunnah of the rightly-guided successors with the sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him). He stated,

> The scholars have had lengthy discussions on this point and have tried to reinterpret the hadith in ways that are mostly far-fetched. What one must conclude and follow is [that we are] to act upon what these words mean in their context in Arabic. The sunnah is the path. It is as if he said, "Stick to my path and the path of the rightly-guided successors." It is as if their path is the same as his path. They were the people who were the strictest in guarding the sunnah and following it in everything. In any case, they were very careful about differing from the sunnah in even the smallest matter, not to speak of the larger matters. If they did not have any evidence from the Book of Allah or the sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), they would act in accord with what was apparent to them of personal opinion, after searching, researching, consulting others and pondering the matter. This opinion, when there is no evidence, is also part of his [the Prophet's] sunnah... If you [the listener] say: If what they acted upon of personal opinion is also of his sunnah, then there is no point to him saying, "and the way of the rightly-guided successors." I respond: The benefit of this statement is that there are people who were not alive during the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) but were alive during the time of the rightly-guided caliphs or were alive during the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and of the rightly-guided caliphs but something was done that was not done during the Prophet's time, but the caliphs did it. So directing one to the practice of the rightly-guided caliphs removes any doubt or confusion in the soul of the person and

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[1] Ibn al-Arabi, vol. 10, p. 147; ibn Daqeeq al-Eid, *Sharh*, p. 75.

[2] Suhaaranfoori, vol. 18, p. 147.

> [this hadith] makes his mind clear to follow them. The least point that one can make from this hadith is that the personal opinion that comes from the caliphs, if it is to be considered from [the Prophet's] sunnah as was stated, must take precedence over other personal opinion when no evidence is present.[1]

On the other hand, al-Sanaani takes a much more restricted approach. He stated that all what is meant by following the sunnah of the rightly-guided caliphs is to follow them in that which they follow the sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him), concerning jihad against the unbelievers, establishing the practices of the religion and so forth.[2]

Another View

Not everyone is of the opinion that the "rightly-guided successors" as mentioned in this hadith are only Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthmaan and Ali. Al-Qaari, for example, states that "it is said," that it is these four but later he says, "It is also said" that it refers to all of the scholars of Islam (*mujtahideen*), as they are the successors to the Prophet (peace be upon him) in that they revive the truth, guide the people and raise the banner of Islam. Al-Qaari himself does not state which view he prefers.[3]

Al-Mudaabaghi states that the successors are first and foremost the Companions in general.[4] The problem with this view is that it makes what the Prophet (peace be upon him) specifically told them almost meaningless. It would mean that the Prophet (peace be upon him) told his Companions, "You will see lots of differences, so follow my sunnah and your sunnah and stick to them..." Allah knows best, but this seems to be a strange bit of advice. One could understand him telling them that they should stick to the leaders of the Companions who are rightly-guided and sure to follow the way of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in their own personal rulings (*ijtihaad*).

In his commentary to this hadith, al-Sindi makes no explicit mention of Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthmaan and Ali. He stated that the meaning of the rightly-guided successors are the Imams who are followed and the respected scholars of deep knowledge.[5] Hence, he is not restricting it to the above mentioned four caliphs. According to this understanding, during times of confusion and trials, one should follow the way of the Prophet (peace be upon him) as well as the way of the well-known accepted leaders and scholars of Islam.

In his commentary to this hadith, ibn Uthaimeen wrote,

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[1] Quoted in al-Mubaarakfoori, vol. 7, pp. 440-441.

[2] Quoted in al-Mubaarakfoori, vol. 3, pp. 50-51.

[3] Al-Qaari, vol. 1, pp. 242-243.

[4] Al-Mudaabaghi, p. 220.

[5] Al-Sindi, *Sharh al-Arbaeen*, p. 94.

> [The word] *khulafaa* is the plural of *khaleefah*: they are the people who succeed the Prophet (peace be upon him) among his Nation in knowledge, actions, calling to Islam, jihad and rule. At the head of them are the four rightly-guided caliphs, Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthmaan and Ali, may Allah be pleased with them. May we be joined with them in the gardens of pleasure. These four caliphs and the successors of the Nation who come after them, those who succeed the Prophet (peace be upon him) in this Nation, they are the ones whose paths we are ordered to follow. But one must realize that the sunnah of these successors comes after the sunnah of the Messenger (peace be upon him). If there is any conflict between the sunnah of any of these successors with the sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him), the rule is with the sunnah of Muhammad (peace be upon him) and with no one else. This is because their sunnah comes after or follows the sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him).[1]

As evidence for his last statement above, ibn Uthaimeen quotes ibn Abbaas who said, "Soon I would expect rocks to fall upon you from the sky when I say, 'The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said something,' and you answer, 'Abu Bakr and Umar said.'" That is with respect to Abu Bakr and Umar. What then, says ibn Uthaimeen, must be the case with those who are less in stature than Abu Bakr and Umar?[2] Elsewhere, while discussing the same point, ibn Uthaimeen stated that one must follow what the Prophet (peace be upon him) said and excuse any Companion who may have said anything that goes against what the Prophet (peace be upon him) said. Such a statement must be from his personal reasoning and judgment, for which he may be excused.[3]

Muhammad Al-Ashqar also does not agree that the rightly-guided successors are the four well-known caliphs. Al-Alaai had stated that there is a consensus that the rightly-guided caliphs are the four and only those four caliphs. Al-Ashqar wrote the following footnote to that statement of al-Alaai's,

> I do not know where that consensus came from. Just because it became customary to use that term for those four does not mean that the Muslim Nation did not have any rightly-guided successor after them. The hadith describes the attribute and does not identify who the people are. Every successor (caliph) who is pious and rightly-guided, following the truth, desiring the truth and not following his desires in his rule and what he orders and prohibits is a rightly-guided caliph. It would be a consensus only if the people of consensus would say that there is no rightly-guided caliph after those four. God forbid that

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[1] Ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 3, pp. 338-339.
[2] Ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 3, p. 340.
[3] ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh al-Aqeedah al-Waasitiyah*, vol. 2, p. 314.

> they should say that. Furthermore, the hadith that the author [al-Alaai] quotes is contradicted by many other hadith; such as the hadith, "The *khilaafah* will stay among the Quraish until the Hour is established."...[1]

But al-Ashqar's final argument does not seem to be very strong. All of the other hadith he quotes simply mention successors but do not mention them as being rightly-guided, right-principled. Therefore, one could argue that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was specifically referring to a special group of successors, distinguishing them from the others, and not saying that these would be the only successors. Later successors might even by rightly-guided but not to the extent of the first four caliphs. Hence, they would be deserving of such an honorific title.

Conclusion Concerning the Meaning of This Passage

All scholars seem to agree that the expression, "rightly-guided successors" applies first and foremost to Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthmaan and Ali. The question is whether this expression is pointing to them only or is it more general and, therefore, refers to all rightly-guided successors who follow the way of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

If the expression is taken in a more general sense, the hadith is of little value from a legal theory point of view. In other words, it points to the importance of following those who follow the way of the Prophet (peace be upon him), yet it is agreed upon that the *ijtihaad* of later scholars is simply their *ijtihaad* and other scholars are not bound to follow what they concluded.

If the expression is taken to mean the four rightly-guided caliphs only, the question is to what extent must one follow the views of those four rightly-guided caliphs. When they make *ijtihaad*, is it binding on all others? It seems that such was not the understanding of the Companions themselves. Many of them differed with the four rightly-guided caliphs on different issues of *ijtihaad*. Indeed, Umar even differed with Abu Bakr on some matters of *ijtihaad*.

From the above, it seems that this hadith is not a hadith pointing to the obligation of following the *ijtihaad* of either the four rightly-guided caliphs or of particular later scholars who follow the way of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Put into the entire context of the hadith, this statement seems to be pointing to a broader concept. Innovations and differences have appeared and continue to appear among the Muslim nation. In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) instructed Muslims how to react to such innovations and differences. One does not follow such innovations and new ideas. Instead, one sticks to the way of religion of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and those who adhered to his path, who are first and foremost Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthmaan and Ali, and secondly the remainder of the Companions and great scholars throughout Islam. Their approach to the religion is the one and only correct approach to Islam— this is different from saying that they were correct in their individual *ijtihaad*. Their refusal to stray from the way of the Prophet (peace be upon him), their refusal to introduce new beliefs or concepts into Islam, their strict adherence to the sunnah in all matters, large or small, these are the type of matters concerning which they are setting the supreme example. One should not stray from their general approach in the least. Any straying from their approach to Islam is a misguidance and heresy.

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[1] Muhammad al-Ashqar, footnotes to al-Alaai, *Ijmaal*, pp. 49-50.

Now the Muslim has many examples or guides that he can look to in the face of differences and new ideas that cropped into Islam. He can see how the Prophet (peace be upon him) dealt with such ideas or comparable situations. If they did not exist during the Prophet's time, he can look at how the four rightly-guided caliphs dealt with such or similar issues. If they did not encounter the problem, he can see how the other Companions dealt with such an issue. If even there the situation was not dealt with, he can look to see how the well-known and accepted scholars who adhered to the way of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his pious successors dealt with such an issue. The Muslim should cling dearly to their ways. When he does this, he will be safe from innovations and misguidance.

Allah knows best.

"Bite onto that with your molar teeth."

The Prophet (peace be upon him) referred to his sunnah and the sunnah of the rightly-guided successors as being one entity.[1] This implies the closeness between the two and the fact that they were following the same path as his path. This is further evidence that the path of Islam is one and not many.[2] There is only the correct path of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). His path is one path and it is the same path as the path of the rightly-guided successors after him. Anyone who claims any other way has fallen into innovations and misguidance.

The exhortation to bite onto their way with one's molar teeth is a way of expressing how closely one should adhere to their path. One must cling to their way in a manner similar to how one bites onto something with one's molar teeth. If anyone tries to pull away what the person is biting on, it would be difficult. Similarly, it would be very difficult to pull the believer away from the path of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his followers who tread his path.

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[1] In other words, he said عليها instead of عليهما. The former would be translated as, "stick to those two," instead of, "stick to that."

[2] Cf., Taataay, pp. 234-235.

This portion of the hadith, as al-Haitami points out, may also be implying the type of patience that it takes to strictly adhere to the path of the Prophet (peace be upon him). One must have great patience to stick to that path and the only way that can be done is to stick to it in a manner similar to the way one bites onto something with his molar teeth.[1]

"And avoid newly-introduced matters."

What is being referred to here are those matters that are newly-introduced into the religion after the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him), also known as *bidah* or heresies. This is not in reference to technical innovations and matters of that nature which are, in most cases, permissible. In general, the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not restrict what people did for their material or technical welfare in worldly matters. In fact, the Prophet (peace be upon him) once told his companions, when they had stopped cross-pollinating dates,

أَنْتُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِأَمْرِ دُنْيَاكُمْ

"You are more knowledgeable about the affair of your worldly life." (Recorded by Muslim.)

Allah says in the Quran,

ٱلۡيَوۡمَ أَكۡمَلۡتُ لَكُمۡ دِينَكُمۡ وَأَتۡمَمۡتُ عَلَيۡكُمۡ نِعۡمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ ٱلۡإِسۡلَٰمَ دِينٗاۚ

"This day have I perfected for you your religion and have completed my blessings upon you and have chosen for you Islam as a religion" (*al-Maaidah* 3). This means that the guidance is complete. It is all that the Muslims need for happiness in this world and in the hereafter. It is, therefore, in no need of additions, alterations or deletions. This point has been aptly summarized in a hadith. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

مَا تَرَكْتُ شَيْئًا مِمَّا أَمَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ بِهِ إِلا وَقَدْ أَمَرْتُكُمْ بِهِ وَلا تَرَكْتُ شَيْئًا مِمَّا نَهَاكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ إِلا وَقَدْ نَهَيْتُكُمْ عَنْهُ

"I have not left anything that Allah has ordered of you except that I have ordered you to do it. And I have not left anything which He has prohibited for you except that I have prohibited it for you."[1] Imam Malik said, "If someone innovates something in the religion of Islam that he believes is good, he has, thereby, alleged that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has been disloyal to his message. That is true because Allah said, 'This day have I perfected...' What was not part of the religion during the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his Companions is not part of the religion today."[2]

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[1] Cf., al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 221.

The Meaning of *Bidah*

In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) clearly warned against the following of innovations. All of them are misguidance. Many people are confused concerning the exact nature or meaning of *bidah.*

One of the reasons for confusion concerning innovations is that there is more than one definition given by the scholars for the term *bidah.* From a lexical point of view, the meaning of *bidah* is,

> An innovation; a novelty; anything originated, invented or innovated; anything made, done, produced, caused to be or exist, or brought into existence, namely, for the first time, it not having been or existed before, and not after the similitude of anything pre-existing.[3]

However, the *shareeah* or legal definition of *bidah* may not be the same as the lexical definition. This fact has confused some people concerning innovations. They have failed to note that the *shareeah* position toward all matters newly introduced into the religion as acts of worship is one. Unfortunately, the source of this confusion has been the scholars themselves who differed and then failed to emphasize this point.

It could be stated that there are three popular categories of definitions for *bidah* among the scholars, some are much more "extensive" or "encompassing" than others.

The first group gives a broad definition for *bidah* that encompasses every new thing that has appeared after the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him). For example, Al-Shafi'ee has divided innovations into good and evil ones, praiseworthy and blameworthy ones. He said, "Innovations are of two types: a praiseworthy innovation and a blameworthy innovation. Whatever is in agreement with the sunnah is praiseworthy and whatever is in disagreement with the sunnah is blameworthy."[1] Ibn Hazm has given a similar definition stating, "Innovations in the religion are everything that is not found in the Quran or in the sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) but for some of them the person who performs them will receive a reward due to his goal of performing what is good... These are those acts that are in essence permissible... Then there are some that are blameworthy."[2] Al-Ghazzaali, ibn al-Atheer, Abdul Haqq al-Dahlawi, al-Izz ibn Abdul Salaam, al-Nawawi and Abu Shaama have all given similar definitions.[3] These definitions imply that there are some innovations that are obligatory, recommended or permissible.

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[1] Recorded by al-Baihaqi, al-Tabaraani and others. Ahmad Shaakir and al-Albaani say it is *sahih.* Saleem al-Hilaali says this hadith is *sahih* due to its numerous chains. See Saleem al-Hilaali's footnotes to Muhammad Sultaan al-Masoomi, *Hal al-Muslim Mulzim bi-Itibaa Madhhab Muayyin min al-Madhaahib al-Arba* (Kuwait: Jamiah Ihyaa al-Turaath al-Islaami, 1404 A.H.), p. 22.

[2] Quoted in Shaatibi, *al-Itisaam*, vol. 1, p. 49.

[3] Lane, vol. 1, p. 167.

The problem with definitions of this type is that they do not take into account the fact that the Prophet (peace be upon him) has clearly condemned all innovations as deviant acts. This should be taken into consideration in order to determine the *shareeah* definition of *bidah.* There may be many new things after the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him). They are not all to be condemned. Therefore, from the *shareeah* point of view, they are not all to be considered *bidah.*

A second definition is given by ibn Rajab. He defined *bidah* as, "Any innovation that has no source whatsoever in the *shareeah* that points to it. If something has some source in the *shareeah* that points to it, it is not a *bidah* according to the legal definition [of *bidah*] although it is a *bidah* according to the word's lexical definition."[4] Ibn Hajr al-Asqillaani, ibn Hajr al-Haitami, al-Zarkashi and Muhammad Bukhait have all given similar definitions.[5]

Therefore, according to this group a *bidah* is any blameworthy innovation but this does not imply everything that occurred after the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) but only those that are in contradiction to the basic sources of Islam, the Quran and the sunnah. The only problem with this definition is that there is nothing in it to distinguish an innovation from a sin. Although an innovation is sinful, it is clearly something different from and more harmful than other sins that a person commits.

Al-Shaatibi has perhaps done the best job of tying together the different concepts related to *bidah*, as found in the Quran and hadith, in order to determine the definition of *bidah* from the *shareeah*'s point of view.

Al-Shaatibi has given two clear definitions for *bidah* in *al-Itisaam.* He wrote

> A *bidah* is any invented act or path that is made to resemble part of the *shareeah* and it is followed as an act of worship of Allah. This definition is according to those who are of the opinion that customary acts [or non-religious acts] do not fall

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[1] Quoted in Abdul Rahmaan Abu Shaama, *Al-Baath ala Inkar al-Bidah wa al-Hawaadith* (Cairo: Daar al-Huda, 1978), p.22.

[2] Quoted in Izzat Atiyya, *Al-Bidah* (Cairo: Daar al-Kutub al-Hadeethiya), p. 196.

[3] Ibid., pp. 196-198.

[4] Abdul Rahmaan Ibn Rajab, *Jaami al-Uloom wa al-Hikm* (Riyadh: Daar al-Ifta), p. 52.

[5] They were all quoted in Atiyya, pp. 198-200.

> under the category of innovations. It is only concerned with acts of worship. But the definition according to those that would include worldly acts under the topic of *bidah* is any invented act or way in the religion that is made to resemble the *shareeah* and that is followed for the same reason that the *shareeah* is supposed to be followed.[1]

According to the first definition, any action that is not related to the religion in any way (that is, it is purely related to worldly needs) is not considered a *bidah.* Similarly, if there is some direct source for an action in the Quran or sunnah, it will also not be considered an innovation.

Al-Shaatibi also wrote,

> The *shareeah* was revealed for the temporary and permanent benefit of mankind, for mankind's happiness in both this world and the Hereafter. This is also the goal of the innovator when he invents something. An innovation is either related to non-religious acts or it is related to acts of worship. If the innovation is related to worship, it is meant to get the person the greatest reward in the Hereafter according to what [the innovator] alleges. Similarly, if it is related to non-religious actions, it is meant for the person's maximum benefit in this life [but, in fact, this can only be attained by following the pure *shareeah*].[2]

Therefore, in conclusion, an innovation or *bidah* is: (1) any ritual act that is not based in the Quran or sunnah that is done as an act of worship of Allah; (2) any worldly act that a person performs claiming it in itself is pleasing to Allah while there is nothing in the Quran or sunnah to support that claim.[3]

Texts Related to the Prohibition of *Bidah*

The hadith being commented upon here is one of the many texts that prove that it is forbidden to follow innovations in the religion. Beyond this hadith, there are also the following important hadith:

مَنْ أَحْدَثَ فِي أَمْرِنَا هَذَا مَا لَيْسَ مِنْهُ فَهُوَ رَدٌّ

"Whoever introduces anything into this matter of ours that is not from it shall have it rejected."[4] (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

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[1] Al-Shaatibi, vol. 1, p. 37.

[2] Al-Shaatibi, vol. 1, p. 41.

[3] Mandane or worldly acts may be pleasing to Allah. However, not due to the nature of the act itself but because it was a permissible act done with an intention that pleased Allah.

[4] This hadith was Hadith Number 5 from al-Nawawi's collection.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ حَجَبَ التَّوْبَةَ عَنْ صَاحِبِ كُلِّ بِدْعَةٍ

"Allah puts a barrier in front of repentance for every companion of innovations."[1]

أَبَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَقْبَلَ عَمَلَ صَاحِبِ بِدْعَةٍ حَتَّى يَدَعَ بِدْعَتَهُ

"Allah refuses to accept the deeds of the companion of innovations until he leaves his innovation."[2]

It is true that people who follow innovations are not following the path of Allah and, it should be noted, that the path of Allah is one path and only one path. Abdullah ibn Masood said,

خَطَّ لَنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ خَطًّا ثُمَّ قَالَ هَذَا سَبِيلُ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ خَطَّ خُطُوطًا
عَنْ يَمِينِهِ وَعَنْ شِمَالِهِ ثُمَّ قَالَ هَذِهِ سُبُلٌ عَلَى كُلِّ سَبِيلٍ مِنْهَا شَيْطَانٌ يَدْعُو إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ قَرَأَ (
إِنَّ هَذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ)

"The Prophet (peace be upon him) drew a line for us and then said, 'This is the path of Allah.' Then he drew some lines on the right and the left of the first one and said, 'These are paths upon each of which is a devil calling to it.' Then he recited the verse, 'This is My Straight path, so follow it. Follow not other ways, as you will then stray from His way.'"[3] Thus, there is only one path of guidance and that is what is found in the Quran and sunnah. Such is also the path of the rightly-guided successors. That path is the opposite of the paths of innovations.

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[1] Recorded by al-Tabaraani. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Targheeb wa al-Tarheeb*, vol. 1, pp. 25-26. Al-Shaatibi has offered an explanation for why there is a barrier between the innovator and repentance. He says,"The reason they are away from repentance is because it is hard for them to obey the *shareeah* because they are following a way that opposes the *shareeah* and that is only consistent with their own desires. The truth is very hard on them. Their souls only follow what they like and do not wish to follow any other thing. Every innovation is followed due to the power of desires as its source is their invention and not the *shareeah*.... Furthermore, the innovator claims to be following some proof and claims to be implementing the *shareeah* [therefore, it is very hard for him to repent and follow the real truth]." Al-Shaatibi, *Itisaam*, vol. 1, p. 124.

[2] Recorded by ibn Maajah and ibn Abu Aasim. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Targheeb wa al-Tarheeb*, vol. 1, p. 26.

[3] Recorded by Ahmad. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani's footnotes to ibn Abu al-Izz, p. 525.

"And every heresy is a going astray (*dhalaalah*)."

Many times when the Prophet (peace be upon him) would deliver a sermon, during the introductory portion he would say, "The worst actions are the invented ones. And every innovation is misguidance (*dhalaala*)." In other narrations he would say, "And every misguidance is in the hell fire."

The word *dhaall* (ضال) means, "Erring, straying, or going astray; deviating from the right way or course, or from that which is right; missing or losing the right way."[1] The term *dhalaalah*, derived from *dhaal*, has a strong connotation in the Quran and sunnah. Perhaps the severity of this description is not appreciated by most Muslims. Al-Shaatibi wrote,

> An innovation is a going astray. And the innovator is straying and leading others astray. *Dhalaala* is mentioned in many of the reported texts. It is alluded to in the Quranic verses about splitting into sects and breaking up the community and following the errant paths but this is not how other sins are described. The term *dhalaala* is usually not used except for innovations or things similar to innovations. The intentional sins that are made by someone in the *shareeah*— and these are to be forgiven-— are not called *dhalaala*... In fact, this term is not even used for those who intentionally commit any of the other sins... There are many examples of this nature. All of them point to the fact that *dhalaala* is usually used for the case where a person follows some doubtful proof or he blindly follows a person who is following such. They follow that in place of the *shareeah* and they take it as their religion although the way of truth is very clear.[2]

The one who commits sins is different from the innovator as the sinner still accepts the *shareeah* as the supreme law and decision maker while the innovator takes his own desires or whims as the supreme decision maker.

As noted above, this hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) stresses that every innovation is a going astray. There is no such thing, from the *shareeah* point of view, as a good innovation. Al-Shaatibi is a adamant on this point saying, "You should know— may Allah have mercy on you— that what we have presented as evidence is proof through many means that all innovations are blameworthy." His points are: (1) All of the prophetic texts use the word *bidah* in an unrestricted sense without any qualifier or in general terms without any particularization. (2) It is a fundamental principle that any absolute predicate or absolute legal evidence that is repeated in many places and that has much supporting evidence, with nothing that confines it or makes it specific, is evidence that it applies in general without any re-striction.[1] (3) There is a consensus among the Companions and the Followers that *every* innovation is misguidance. (4) The innovator has invented his act himself (or he is following someone who has invented an act) in opposition to what the *shareeah* has decreed. Therefore, it is not logically possible to say that some such innovations are good while others are bad. This is an insult to the *shareeah.* Therefore, all innovations are bad.[2]

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[1] Lane, vol. 2, p. 1798.

[2] Al-Shaatibi, *Itisaam*, vol. 1, p. 133 and then p. 139.

It is important that this point be clear to all Muslims. There is no room to add or delete anything from the perfect religion of Islam. When people talk about "good *bidah*s" and "bad *bidah*s" it simply adds to the confusion. Al-Ali wrote,

> Concerning what the first group says,[3] that innovations may be forbidden or may be legal, that is a usage of the term that implies some kind something of insignificance for the forbidden innovations; it makes the warnings about them seem exaggerated; and it makes some of the people accept them as something customary or excusable. This is true because the innovation may be forbidden or it may be legal, therefore they reduce the emphasis on rejecting the act.[4]

In conclusion, anyone who claims to be worshipping Allah by any belief, act or practice that is not founded upon the Quran and sunnah is simply following an innovation and heresy. That innovation is not pleasing to Allah and does not take the person any closer to Allah. Indeed, it takes him further away from Allah and, as the narration in al-Nasaai implies, it may take him to the Hell-fire. Therefore, everyone must make sure that he is worshipping Allah in accordance with the Quran and sunnah. If his act of worship is not in accord with the Quran and sunnah, it will be rejected by Allah.

"I left you all on a clear matter, whose night is like its day [with respect to clarity]. No one strays from it after me but the destroyed one."

This portion of the hadith highlights the fact that the difference between true Islam and innovations is obvious for those who truly wish to see.

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[1] What al-Shaatibi is saying here is that if a principle is repeated often in the Quran and hadith and nowhere is this principle particularized and there is no evidence that suggests that it does not apply to every case, then it does apply to every case. An example is the principle that "no person shall bear the burden of another" which is mentioned a few times in the Quran and which is not particularized in any verse or hadith. Hence, it is true for all situations.

[2] Al-Shaatibi, *Itisaam*, vol. 1, pp. 141-5. Also see his discussion on pp. 191-211.

[3] He is referring to those who define *bidah* in such a way that it leaves the door open to their being good and bad *bidah*, obligatory, recommended or prohibited *bidah*.

[4] Saalih al-Ali, "Al-Bidah Taan fi al-Deen," *Majallat al-Bahooth al-Islaamiyah* (Vol. 14, Dhul-Qaadah, 1405 A.H.), p. 162.

The teachings of Islam are clear. There is no need for mystical or esoteric instructions or teachers to explain the religion.

Many— if not all— innovators have to resort to fancy or mysterious proofs in order to justify their actions because, in reality, their actions or beliefs are not justifiable from the clear Quran and sunnah. The way of the Prophet (peace be upon him), the true path of Islam, is clear, very clear. It is so clear that its night is just like its day. There are no dark or hidden aspects to it. There is no reason for anyone to be lost from its path unless, of course, he so desires to be lost from its path.

Those who then choose to ignore this straight, clear path of the Prophet (peace be upon him) have only harmed themselves. Indeed, they have destroyed themselves by taking themselves to the Fire, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated in another hadith,

إِنَّ أَصْدَقَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ وَأَحْسَنَ الْهَدْيِ هَدْيُ مُحَمَّدٍ وَشَرُّ الْأُمُورِ مُحْدَثَاتُهَا
وَكُلُّ مُحْدَثَةٍ بِدْعَةٌ وَكُلُّ بِدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ وَكُلُّ ضَلَالَةٍ فِي النَّارِ

"The most truthful speech is the speech of Allah. The best guidance is the guidance of Muhammad. The worst matters are the newly-invented matters. And every newly-invented matter is an innovation and heresy. And every heresy is a going astray. And every going astray is in the Fire."[1]

Recorded by Abu Daawood...

Abu Daawood

Abu Daawood Sulaimaan ibn al-Aashath al-Azdi al-Sijistaani was born in 202 A.H. He began to study at an early age and traveled to further his knowledge of hadith. He traveled to Khurasaan, Rayy, Kufa, Baghdad, Damascus, Egypt and Basra. By 221 A.H., he was in Baghdad. After that time, he spent twenty years in Tarsus. Finally, he was convinced by the ruler to move to Basra to teach there. He died in Basra in 275.

Among his prominent teachers was Ahmad ibn Hanbal. One of Abu Daawood's books is *Masaail al-Imam Ahmad*, which is a collection of questions put to Imam Ahmad and the Imam's responses. His other teachers included Yahya ibn Maeen, Ishaaq ibn Rahawaih, Uthmaan ibn Abu Shaibah, Musaddad ibn Mursarhad and Abu al-Waleed al-Tayaalisi. He was a contemporary of al-Bukhari and Muslim and learned from many of the same teachers. His students include al-Tirmidhi and al-Nasaai.

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[1] Recorded by al-Nasaai. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh Sunan al-Nasaai* (Riyadh: Maktab al-Tarbiyah al-Arabiya li-Duwal al-Khaleej, 1988), vol. 1, pp. 345-346.

Abu Daawood compiled a number of books. One of his well-known works is called *al-Maraaseel*, that discusses chains which have broken links. He is best known for his *Sunan*[1] collection. This is an important collection of hadith on various fiqh topics. Abu Daawood would often make comments if there were any defects in the hadith he recorded. He presented that book to Ahmad ibn Hanbal for his review and Ahmad praised the work.[2]

Other Points Related to This Hadith

- Knowing the sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and what is consistent with it is one of the most important matters that one must learn. It is the way of salvation. Similarly, knowing and recognizing innovations and heresies, which are on the path to destruction, is also one of the important topics to learn. One of the best ways to avoid heresies is to know them and where and how they appear. The one who does not know what is evil often falls into such evil. Many people are ignorant of this matter and fail to learn the sunnah or recognize what are innovations and heresies.[3] Hence, they become lost without realizing it at all.

Summary of the Hadith

- The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to give speeches, admonitions and words of advice to his Companions. The effect on the Companions was that their hearts would become fearful and their eyes tearful.
- The Companions felt that it may have been a farewell admonition that the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave, so they asked him for some final words of advice.
- The Prophet (peace be upon him) began his advice to them by telling them to have *taqwa* or fear of Allah.
- He ordered them to listen to and obey the ruler, regardless of who the ruler might be.
- He warned them of future times in which there would be lots of differences and confusion. He gave them the key to being rescued from those differences: stick to the sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and those who adhered to his way. Do not stray from this path in any way. Adhere to it as if biting onto it with one's molar teeth.
- The Prophet (peace be upon him) then warned them about the newly-invented matters that were going to appear. He stated that all of them are

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[1] This work has been translated into English: Ahmad Hasan, trans. *Sunan Abu Dawud* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1984).

[2] The information concerning Abu Daawood was derived from Taqiy al-Deen al-Mudhaahari, *Abu Daawood: al-Imaam al-Haafidh al-Faqeeh* (Damascus: Daar al-Qalam, 1980), *passim*.

[3] Cf., Sindi, *Sharh al-Arbaeen*, p. 94.

misguidance and lead one astray from the Straight Path, the path of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Hadith #29:
“Tell me an Act which…”

عَنْ مُعَاذِ بْنِ جَبَلٍ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ
أَخْبِرْنِي بِعَمَلٍ يُدْخِلُنِي الْجَنَّةَ وَيُبَاعِدُنِي عَنِ النَّارِ قَالَ لَقَدْ
سَأَلْتَ عَنْ عَظِيمٍ وَإِنَّهُ لَيَسِيرٌ عَلَى مَنْ يَسَّرَهُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهِ
تَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ وَلاَ تُشْرِكْ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَتُقِيمُ الصَّلاَةَ وَتُؤْتِي الزَّكَاةَ
وَتَصُومُ رَمَضَانَ وَتَحُجُّ الْبَيْتَ ثُمَّ قَالَ أَلاَ أَدُلُّكَ عَلَى أَبْوَابِ
الْخَيْرِ الصَّوْمُ جُنَّةٌ وَالصَّدَقَةُ تُطْفِئُ الْخَطِيئَةَ كَمَا يُطْفِئُ الْمَاءُ
النَّارَ وَصَلاَةُ الرَّجُلِ مِنْ جَوْفِ اللَّيْلِ قَالَ ثُمَّ تَلا (تَتَجَافَى
جُنُوبُهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ) حَتَّى بَلَغَ (يَعْمَلُونَ) ثُمَّ قَالَ أَلا
أُخْبِرُكَ بِرَأْسِ الْأَمْرِ وَعَمُودِهِ وَذِرْوَةِ سَنَامِهِ قُلْتُ بَلَى يَا
رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ رَأْسُ الأَمْرِ الإِسْلامُ وَعَمُودُهُ الصَّلاَةُ
وَذِرْوَةُ سَنَامِهِ الْجِهَادُ ثُمَّ قَالَ أَلا أُخْبِرُكَ بِمَلاكِ ذَلِكَ كُلِّهِ
قُلْتُ بَلَى يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ فَأَخَذَ بِلِسَانِهِ قَالَ كُفَّ عَلَيْكَ هَذَا
فَقُلْتُ يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ وَإِنَّا لَمُؤَاخَذُونَ بِمَا نَتَكَلَّمُ بِهِ فَقَالَ
ثَكِلَتْكَ أُمُّكَ يَا مُعَاذُ وَهَلْ يَكُبُّ النَّاسَ فِي النَّارِ عَلَى
وُجُوهِهِمْ أَوْ عَلَى مَنَاخِرِهِمْ إِلاَّ حَصَائِدُ أَلْسِنَتِهِمْ
رَوَاهُ التِّرْمِذِيُّ وَقَالَ حَدِيْثٌ حَسَنٌ صَحِيْحٌ

On the authority of Muaadh ibn Jabal (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: I said, “O Messenger of Allah, inform me of an act which will place me into Paradise and

keep me away from the Fire." He said, "You have asked about a great matter but it is easy for whomever Allah, Exalted be He, makes it easy. [You should] worship Allah and not ascribe any partner to Him, establish the prayer, give the zakat, fast Ramadhan and make the pilgrimage to the House." He then said, "Shall I not inform you of the gates to goodness? [They are] fasting [which] is a shield, charity [which] extinguishes the sins like water extinguishes a fire and the prayer of a man in the depths of the night [which also extinguishes sins]." Then he recited [the verses], "Who forsake their beds" until he reached, "they used to do." Then he said, "Shall I not inform you of the head of the matter, its pillar and its apex[1]?" I said, "Certainly, O Prophet of Allah." He said, "The head of the matter is submission [to Allah]. Its pillar is the prayer. And its apex is jihad." Then he said, "Shall I not inform you of what controls all of this?" I said, "Certainly, O Prophet of Allah." He took hold of his tongue and said, "Restrain this." I said, "O Prophet of Allah, will we be held accountable for what we say?" He said, "May your mother be bereaved of you, O Muaadh. Is there anything that has people thrown on their faces— or he said on their noses— into the Fire except that which their tongues reap?" Recorded by al-Tirmidhi and he said, "It is a *hasan sahih* hadith."

Selected Vocabulary

أخبرني - "Inform me, tell me," the ني represents the "me" part
يدخلني - "which enters me,"
يباعدني - "makes me far from, distances me"
سألت - "you asked"
أبواب - "gates, doors"
جنة - "a shield"
جوف الليل - جوف implies the midst or depths of something, here it refers to the middle of the night or during the night; الليل is the night.
تتجافى - "raise"
عموده - "its pillar"
ذروة سنامه - the ذروة is the highest point or apex of something; سنام is a camel's hump; together they imply the highest point of some matter

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[1] What has been translated here as, "apex" literally means, "the uppermost part of a camel's hump."

ملاك	- the ملاك of something is the thing that controls or rules over something.
نتكلَم	- "we speak"
ثكلتك أمك	"may your mother be bereaved of you," this is an expression from pre-Islamic Arabic. It is like a prayer for somebody's death. But it is not meant as a prayer or supplication. Instead, it is meant as a form of surprise and to alert a person that he has been negligent about a very important matter.
وجوههم	- "their faces"
حصائد	- "harvest, what is reaped"
ألسنتهم	- "their tongues"

Takhreej

This is a *sahih* hadith. It has been recorded through numerous chains from Muaadh ibn Jabal.[1]

It is recorded from Maimoon ibn Abi Shabeeb from Muaadh by ibn Abu Shaiba, Abu Nuaim, al-Haakim, al-Baihaaqi and al-Tabaraani. Although al-Haakim declared this chain *sahih*, this particular chain is actually weak because there is a narrator missing between Maimoon and Muaadh.

It is also recorded from Abdul Rahmaan ibn Ghanam from Muaadh. Through Abdul Rahmaan, this hadith was recorded by Ahmad, al-Tabaraani, al-Bazzaar, al-Daaraqutni in *al-Mutalif wa al-Mukhtalif* and others. There is some slight weakness in those chains due to the different people who narrated it on Abdul Rahmaan's authority.

Another chain for this hadith is Abu Wail on the authority of Muaadh. This is the chain by which al-Tirmidhi recorded this hadith. Besides al-Tirmidhi, it was also recorded by Ahmad, ibn Maajah, Abdul Razzaaq, al-Tabaraani and many others. These chains also have a problem in that the narrator between Abu Wail and Muaadh is missing.

It is also recorded from Abu Salamah from Muaadh. This chain has been recorded by al-Tabaraani, Hannaad in *al-Zuhd* and ibn Abu al-Dunya in *al-Samt*. The narrators in this chain are all trustworthy but, once again, the chain is broken between Abu Salamah and Muaadh.

It is also recorded from Makhool from Muaadh. This has been recorded by ibn Hibbaan, al-Tabaraani, al-Bazzaar and Hannaad in *al-Zuhd*. Once again, Makhool did not hear any hadith from Muaadh, so the chain is broken at that point.

Urwah ibn al-Nazzaal is another narrator who has reported this hadith on the authority of Muaadh. Such has been recorded by Ahmad, al-Tayaalisi, ibn Abu Shaiba, al-Tabaraani and others. This chain is also weak because Urwah is called *maqbool*, meaning his hadith are only accepted if supported by others, and the chain is broken between Urwah and Muaadh.

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[1] Much of the following is based on ibn Muhammad, pp. 173-178.

This hadith has also been recorded from Atiyah ibn Qais from Muaadh. This was recorded by Ahmad and Abu Nuaim. This chain is weak because Atiyah did not hear any hadith from Muaadh and because its chain contains a weak narrator, Abu Bakr ibn Abu Maryam.

This hadith has been recorded from Nuaim ibn Wahb by Muhammad al-Marwoozi in *Tadheem Qadr al-Salaat*, but that chain has two weak narrators.

Finally, the hadith has also been recorded from Abu Amr al-Shaibaani from Muaadh. This was recorded by al-Tabaraani and by ibn al-Bannaa in *al-Risaalah al-Mughniyah*. This narration has a *sahih*, unbroken chain to it. Ibn Muhammad stated, "This chain is the soundest of the chains for this hadith."[1]

The hadith has corroborating evidence in narrations from Abu Huraira, Abu Dhaarr, Abu al-Yaasar and Ibaadah ibn al-Saamit. Some of those narrations are weak while others are of the level of *hasan*.

The conclusion is that due to all of its supporting chains and its one *sahih* chain, the hadith is *sahih*. This is the conclusion of al-Albaani, ibn Muhammad, al-Arnaoot and Baajis, and al-Hilaali.[2]

General Comments About the Hadith

The importance of this hadith is obvious from the request put to the Prophet (peace be upon him), "Inform me of an act which will place me in Paradise and keep me away from the Fire." The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated the basic acts that lead one to Paradise. Then he went on from that to state the acts that open the gates to goodness. He also stated the head of the matter, its pillar and its apex. At the end, he stated what controls all of those matters. In essence, nothing of great importance has been left out of this hadith.

About the Narrator: Muaadh ibn Jabal

The Companion Muaadh ibn Jabal was discussed in the commentary to Hadith Number 18.

"Inform me of an act which will enter me into Paradise and keep me away from the Fire."

Ibn Rajab points out that this was one of the many times that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked such a question. In general, his replies were approximately the same.[3] The Companions knew the most important aspect of life: How to be saved from the Hell-fire and entered into Paradise;

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[1] Ibn Muhammad, p. 177.

[2] Al-Albaani was quoted in Sultaan, p. 254; ibn Muhammad, p. 173; al-Arnaoot and Baajis in ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 134; al-Hilaali, *Eeqaadh*, p. 407.

[3] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 135.

hence, a number of them came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) to ask him this very important question.

In a narration in *Musnad Ahmad*, it states that Muaadh came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said, "O Messenger of Allah, I want to ask you about a statement that has made me ill, sick and burning inside." The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Ask whatever you wish." He said, "Inform me about a deed that will enter me into Paradise and concerning which I will not ask anyone other than you." This shows how much Muaadh was concerned about this issue. It was something that was driving at his soul and burning him up inside. So he came and asked the only one who could give him the sound answer to that question.

This hadith is evidence that it is by one's deeds that a person enters Paradise. This is, in fact, what is stated by Allah in the Quran, when He said,

وَتِلْكَ ٱلْجَنَّةُ ٱلَّتِىٓ أُورِثْتُمُوهَا بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

"This is the Paradise which you have been made to inherit because of your deeds which you used to do [in the life of the world]" (*al-Zukhruf* 72). However, there is a hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) that states,

لَنْ يُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ أَحَدًا عَمَلُهُ قَالُوا وَلا أَنْتَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ وَلا أَنَا إِلاَّ أَنْ يَتَغَمَّدَنِي اللَّهُ مِنْهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ

"No one's deeds enter him into Paradise." They said, "Not even you, O Messenger of Allah?" He said, "Not even me unless Allah envelopes me in His mercy." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.) What this hadith means is that one's actions alone are not sufficient to earn the great rewards and pleasures of Paradise. It is only by Allah's grace, by His rewarding a person much more than he deserves, that one is entered into Paradise. Furthermore, as ibn Rajab points out, a person's deeds are also part of Allah's grace and mercy upon him. Hence, both Paradise and the actions that lead one to Paradise are from Allah's mercy and grace.[1]

"You have asked about a great matter"

The Prophet (peace be upon him) told him that he had asked about a great matter. Indeed, for the human being, is there anything greater than what he had asked? Allah revealed the books and sent the messengers concerning the very matter that he had asked about. All of this information was to show mankind how it could save itself from the Hell-fire and be entered into

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[1] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 136.

Paradise. In this hadith, the Companion Muaadh put all of that into one question.

One can tell by the rest of the Prophet's response that what he meant was not simply that the matter was a great matter. But his response also indicates that it is a very difficult matter. It is a very difficult matter except for those who are blessed by Allah, as shall be discussed below.

Al-Haitami states that entering Paradise and escaping the Hell-fire is indeed a great matter. It is for this reason that people fulfill the commands and remain away from what is prohibited. But, in reality, this is a very great and difficult matter. It is a great matter with respect to its consequences in the Hereafter and it is a great matter upon the soul in this life. Allah has shown that most of mankind will not be able to be victorious in this most important of affairs. He has said,

وَقَلِيلٌ مِّنْ عِبَادِيَ ٱلشَّكُورُ

"But few of My servants are grateful" (*Saba* 13). Allah also says,

وَلَا تَجِدُ أَكْثَرَهُمْ شَٰكِرِينَ

"You will not find most of them thankful [to Allah]" (*al-Araaf* 17).[1]

"but it is easy for whomever Allah, Exalted be He, makes it easy"

This portion of the hadith demonstrates that all guidance is in the hands of Allah. Muaadh had asked about something very great and difficult. However, Allah can make anything easy for anyone. So, Allah can make this grave and difficult matter easy for anyone He wills. Allah opens a person's heart to faith and Islam. The person loves Islam and loves obeying Allah. This makes fulfilling the obligatory deeds easy for him. This makes staying away from the forbidden acts easy for him.

If Allah makes guidance and good deeds easy for a person, then the question of entering Paradise and escaping Hell is an easy matter. If Allah does not make it easy for a person, it will never be easy for him as it is a grave and difficult matter that cannot be made easy except by Allah.

Allah has said in the Quran,

فَأَمَّا مَنْ أَعْطَىٰ وَٱتَّقَىٰ ﴿٥﴾ وَصَدَّقَ بِٱلْحُسْنَىٰ ﴿٦﴾ فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُۥ لِلْيُسْرَىٰ ﴿٧﴾
وَأَمَّا مَنۢ بَخِلَ وَٱسْتَغْنَىٰ ﴿٨﴾ وَكَذَّبَ بِٱلْحُسْنَىٰ ﴿٩﴾ فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُۥ
لِلْعُسْرَىٰ

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[1] Cf., al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 223.

“As for him who gives [in charity] and keeps his duty to Allah and fears Him, and believes in a reward from Allah, We will make smooth for him the path of goodness. But he who is a greedy miser and thinks himself self-sufficient and belies the reward from Allah, We will make smooth for him the path for evil” (*al-Lail* 5-10).

Every believer should realize this fact and turn to Allah for help and guidance. If a person beseeches Allah and strives to follow the straight path, Allah will make the path easy for him. Allah will guide him, as Allah has said,

وَٱلَّذِينَ جَٰهَدُواْ فِينَا لَنَهۡدِيَنَّهُمۡ سُبُلَنَاۚ وَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَمَعَ ٱلۡمُحۡسِنِينَ

“As for those who strive hard in Our cause, We will surely guide them to Our paths. And, verily, Allah is with the doers of good” (*al-Ankaboot* 69).[1]

“[You should] worship Allah… the House.”

In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) told Muaadh that the key to entering Paradise and escaping the Hell-fire is the five pillars of Islam.[2] These acts are the foundation of Islam. If one performs them properly and well, one is bound to enter Paradise.

“Shall I not inform you of the gates to goodness?”

According to al-Haitami, the words, “Shall I not inform you” are of way of attracting the listener’s attention. It shows that something of importance is about to follow.[3] Indeed, the following instruction is of great importance.

Beyond the entry into Paradise, there is a great deal of good that one can receive inside of Paradise. The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not stop at what Muaadh asked. Instead, he showed him the gates or doors to good beyond what Muaadh had asked him.

The pillars of Islam are the obligatory acts that one must fulfill to have a hope of entering Paradise. Now, the Prophet (peace be upon him) is pointing Muaadh to voluntary acts that open the door to greater rewards in Paradise. As shall be discussed under Hadith Number 38, the most beloved servants to Allah are those who get close to Him by performing voluntary acts of worship after completing the acts that are obligatory upon them. The fasting and charity referred to below are, then, the voluntary fasts and charity and not the obligatory fasting of Ramadhan and the zakat.[4]

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[1] Cf., Sultaan, p. 256.

[2] These five pillars were explained in some detail in the commentaries to Hadith Number 2 and Hadith Number 3.

[3] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 224.

[4] Cf., ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 138.

"fasting [which] is a shield"

Since the obligatory fast of Ramadhan has already been mentioned in this hadith, this is an encouragement to increase one's voluntary fasting. The act of fasting is itself a shield. Allah describes obligatory fasting in the following manner,

يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ ٱلصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

"O believers, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may attain *taqwa*" (*al-Baqara* 183). The result of fasting, whether obligatory or voluntary, should be *taqwa*. The word *taqwa* comes from *wiqaayah*, which implies a protection. *Taqwa* means to protect oneself from the Hell-fire by putting a barrier between oneself and the Hell-fire.

In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has given a different but similar description for fasting. He has called it a shield, like the shield that one uses in the battlefield. The shield protects a person from the enemy and fasting protects a person from committing sins and from entering the Hell-fire.

Ibn Rajab points out that fasting is a shield only if the act of fasting is not harmed by foul or improper speech. He quotes the hadith from al-Bukhari and Muslim which states,

الصِّيَامُ جُنَّةٌ وَإِذَا كَانَ يَوْمُ صَوْمِ أَحَدِكُمْ فَلا يَرْفُثْ وَلا يَصْخَبْ فَإِنْ سَابَّهُ أَحَدٌ أَوْ قَاتَلَهُ فَلْيَقُلْ إِنِّي امْرُؤٌ صَائِمٌ

"Fasting is a shield. If it is a day in which one of you is fasting, he should avoid sexual contact and quarreling. If somebody should abuse him or fight him, he should say, 'I am a man who is fasting.'" (Recorded by al-Bukhari.)

Then ibn Rajab makes the point that if fasting is not a shield from committing sins in this world, it will not be a shield from the Hell-fire in the next.[1] Al-Baitaar points out that the word for shield is in the indefinite. This implies that it can be every type of shield. It is a shield from the Hell-fire, from Allah's anger, from disease in this world, from straying from the Straight Path, from becoming arrogant and so forth.[2] If fasting can be such a shield, the person who fasts properly will receive a great deal of reward in Paradise.

There are specific days that a Muslim is recommended but not obliged to fast. These include: the Day of Ashoorah (the 10th of Muharram) along with the 9th or 11th in addition, the Day of Arafah (the 9th of Dhul-Hijjah) for those who are not making the pilgrimage, Monday and Thursday of every week, any three days of every month, the three days of the full moon in the middle of every lunar Islamic month, any days of the first nine days of Dhul-Hijjah and six days in the month of Shawaal.[1]

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[1] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 139.

[2] Al-Baitaar, p. 177.

“charity [which] extinguishes the sins like water extinguishes a fire”

Again, the reference here is to voluntary charity and not the obligatory zakat. Furthermore, the sins referred to here are the minor sins that are between a human and Allah. The major sins are not included here nor are the acts of wrong done toward others. The major sins are not extinguished by charity but are in need of repentance. Wrong done toward others needs their forgiveness.[2]

In the Quran, Allah also states that through charity one’s sins may be wiped away. Allah says,

إِن تُبْدُوا۟ ٱلصَّدَقَـٰتِ فَنِعِمَّا هِىَ ۖ وَإِن تُخْفُوهَا وَتُؤْتُوهَا ٱلْفُقَرَآءَ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ ۚ وَيُكَفِّرُ عَنكُم مِّن سَيِّـَٔاتِكُمْ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ

“If you disclose your charity, it is well; but if you conceal it and give it to the poor, that is better for you. [Allah] will expiate some of your sins. And Allah is well-acquainted with all that you do” (*al-Baqara* 271).

In general, good deeds may wipe away evil deeds. Allah says,

إِنَّ ٱلْحَسَنَـٰتِ يُذْهِبْنَ ٱلسَّيِّـَٔاتِ ۚ

“Verily, the good deeds remove the evil deeds” (*Hood* 114). Al-Haitami states that charity has been specifically mentioned because its benefit extends to others and all of the creatures are Allah’s creatures and dependents. In general, if a person helps another person’s dependents, that removes the latter’s anger. This is also how charity has been described in other reports.[3]

Al-Teebi points out that the removal of sins has been mentioned in three different manners. First is the removal of sins, as in the verse mentioned above. Second is the wiping away or erasing of sins as in the hadith,

أَتْبِعِ السَّيِّئَةَ الْحَسَنَةَ تَمْحُهَا

“Follow up a bad deed with a good deed and it will wipe it out.”[4] The third level is given here in this hadith: the extinguishing of sin. This expression gives the impression that the acts of charity will take one away from the Hell-fire because sins take one to the Hell-fire. If the sins are not extinguished, one will be consumed by the fire of Hell. The person can save himself from being consumed due to his sins by giving in charity, which will extinguish his sins and extinguish the fire for him in the Hereafter.[1]

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[1] Cf., Taataay, pp. 259-260; Sultaan, p. 257.

[2] Cf., al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 224; al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 207.

[3] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, pp. 224-225.

[4] This is from Hadith Number 18 in this collection.

"the prayer of a man in the depths of the night... they used to do."

According to ibn Rajab, the meaning of the Prophet's statement is that the late-night prayer extinguishes sins in the same manner that charity does.[2]

The word *jauf* (جوف) when used along with the word night means the middle of the night. That is the case here. In some cases, there is reference to the جوف of the last of the night. In that case, it is referring to the middle of the last half of the night or, in other words, after five-sixths of the night has passed.[3]

The Importance of the Late-Night Prayer

In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) quoted the following verses of the Quran,

تَتَجَافَىٰ جُنُوبُهُمْ عَنِ ٱلْمَضَاجِعِ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَمِمَّا
رَزَقْنَٰهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ ﴿١٦﴾ فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَّآ أُخْفِىَ لَهُم مِّن قُرَّةِ أَعْيُنٍ جَزَآءًۢ
بِمَا كَانُوا۟ يَعْمَلُونَ

"Their sides forsake their beds to invoke their Lord in fear and hope, and they spend [in charity] out of what We have bestowed on them. No person knows what is kept hidden for them of joy as a reward for what they used to do" (*al-Sajdah* 16-17).[4] There is a great deal of difference of opinion concerning the meaning of the phrase, "their sides forsake their beds," and what prayer it is referring to. However, this statement of the Prophet (peace be upon him) seems to make it clear that the verse is in reference to the late-night prayer, although perhaps not exclusively.[5]

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[1] Quoted in al-Mudaabaghi, p. 224.

[2] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 141.

[3] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 145.

[4] All the commentators on this hadith relate this verse directly only to the late-night prayers in this hadith. (See, for example, ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 142.) However, the verse alludes to both the late-night prayer as well as spending. It could be the case that the Prophet (peace be upon him) recited this verse in relation to both the late-night prayer and the charity that he had just mentioned. Allah knows best.

[5] Other interpretations include performing prayers between the Sunset and Night Prayers, waiting for the Night Prayer, performing the Dawn Prayer, performing the Night and Dawn Prayers in congregation and so forth. Al-Tabari concludes that the verse is general for any prayer said during the night time when people may be sleeping. It is also stated that it was customary for the

Ibn al-Qayyim points out that the people who perform the late night prayer, in general, are hiding that from the eyes of others. Usually, no one sees what they are doing. Therefore, in this verse, Allah specifically states that the reward for what they are doing in a hidden fashion is a great reward that is kept hidden for them. No one can know it now or imagine it.[1]

These are just one set of many verses that emphasize the importance of performing the late-night prayers. Others include the following,[2]

كَانُوا۟ قَلِيلًا مِّنَ ٱلَّيْلِ مَا يَهْجَعُونَ ۝١٧ وَبِٱلْأَسْحَارِ هُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ

"They used to sleep but little at night [spending that time in prayer] and in the hours before dawn, they were found asking for forgiveness [from Allah]" (*al-Dhaariyaat* 17-18). In this verse, Allah is stating some of the characteristics of the pious people who will be entered into Paradise.

Allah said to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), in a verse that demonstrates how praiseworthy the act of late-night prayers is,

وَمِنَ ٱلَّيْلِ فَتَهَجَّدْ بِهِۦ نَافِلَةً لَّكَ عَسَىٰٓ أَن يَبْعَثَكَ رَبُّكَ مَقَامًا مَّحْمُودًا

"And in some parts of the night offer the late-night prayer with it [the Quran], as an additional prayer for you. It may be that your Lord will raise you to a position of praise" (*al-Israa* 79).

Another verse states,

أَمَّنْ هُوَ قَـٰنِتٌ ءَانَآءَ ٱلَّيْلِ سَاجِدًا وَقَآئِمًا يَحْذَرُ ٱلْـَٔاخِرَةَ وَيَرْجُوا۟ رَحْمَةَ
رَبِّهِۦ ۗ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِى ٱلَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَٱلَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ۗ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ
أُو۟لُوا۟ ٱلْأَلْبَـٰبِ

"Is one who is obedient to Allah, prostrating himself or standing [in prayer] during the hours of the night, fearing the Hereafter and hoping for the mercy of his Lord [equal to one who disbelieves]? Say: Are those who know equal to those who know not? It is only people of understanding who will remember [and take a lesson from this]" (*al-Zumar* 9).

In a set of verses describing the true servants of the Merciful, Allah has stated,

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Arabs to sleep after sunset, hence, any prayer said after sunset time would be included in the meaning of this verse. Allah knows best. See Saeed al-Affaani, *Ruhbaan al-Lail* (Cairo: Maktabah ibn Taimiya, 1990), vol. 1, pp. 51-60; Muhammad al-Maroozi, *Mukhtasar Qiyaam al-Lail* (al-Zarqa, Jordan: Maktabah al-Manaar, 1993), pp. 47-76.

[1] Quoted in al-Affaani, vol. 1, p. 58.

[2] For an extensive discussion of the verses related to the late-night prayer, see al-Affaani, vol. 1, pp. 49-128.

وَعِبَادُ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى ٱلْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ
ٱلْجَٰهِلُونَ قَالُوا۟ سَلَٰمًا ﴿٦٣﴾ وَٱلَّذِينَ يَبِيتُونَ لِرَبِّهِمْ سُجَّدًا وَقِيَٰمًا

"The faithful slaves of the Most Merciful [Allah] are those who walk on the earth humbly and when the foolish address them [with improper speech] they simply reply with mild words of gentleness, and those who spend the night in worship of their Lord, prostrate and standing" (*al-Furqaan* 63-64).

Allah has also said,

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلْمُزَّمِّلُ ﴿١﴾ قُمِ ٱلَّيْلَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿٢﴾ نِّصْفَهُۥٓ أَوِ ٱنقُصْ مِنْهُ قَلِيلًا ﴿٣﴾
أَوْ زِدْ عَلَيْهِ وَرَتِّلِ ٱلْقُرْءَانَ تَرْتِيلًا ﴿٤﴾ إِنَّا سَنُلْقِى عَلَيْكَ قَوْلًا ثَقِيلًا ﴿٥﴾ إِنَّ
نَاشِئَةَ ٱلَّيْلِ هِىَ أَشَدُّ وَطْـًٔا وَأَقْوَمُ قِيلًا ﴿٦﴾ إِنَّ لَكَ فِى ٱلنَّهَارِ سَبْحًا
طَوِيلًا ﴿٧﴾ وَٱذْكُرِ ٱسْمَ رَبِّكَ وَتَبَتَّلْ إِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيلًا

"O you [Muhammad] wrapped in garments, stand to pray all night, except a little, half or it or a little less than that, or a little more. And recite the Quran in a slow style. Verily, We shall send down to you a weighty word. Verily, the rising by night is very hard and most potent and good for governing oneself and most suitable for [understanding] the Word [of Allah]. Verily, there is for you by day prolonged occupation with ordinary duties. And remember the Name of your lord and devote yourself to Him with a complete devotion" (*al-Muzzammil* 1-8).

Qataada stated that the late night prayer was made obligatory upon the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his followers in these verses. This was in the earliest part of Islam. The Companions performed that prayer for a year and then the revelation that made the late night prayer voluntary was revealed. The relaxation was because Allah knew that there would be weak people in the community as well as those who would go out seeking Allah's bounty by working and so forth.[1]

There are also many hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) that demonstrate the importance of the late-night prayer (*tahajjud*).[2] These hadith include the following:

أَفْضَلُ الصَّلاةِ بَعْدَ الصَّلاةِ الْمَكْتُوبَةِ الصَّلاةُ فِي جَوْفِ اللَّيْلِ

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[1] See al-Affaani, pp. 75-76.

[2] For a comprehensive discussion of such hadith, see al-Affaani, vol. 1, pp. 129-177.

"The best prayer after the obligatory prayer is that during the depths of the night." (Recorded by Muslim.)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said,

عَلَيْكُمْ بِقِيَامِ اللَّيْلِ فَإِنَّهُ دَأَبُ الصَّالِحِينَ قَبْلَكُمْ وَإِنَّ قِيَامَ اللَّيْلِ قُرْبَةٌ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَمَنْهَاةٌ عَنِ
الإِثْمِ وَتَكْفِيرٌ لِلسَّيِّئَاتِ وَمَطْرَدَةٌ لِلدَّاءِ عَنِ الْجَسَدِ

"You should perform the late-night prayer for verily it was the custom of the pious people before you. Certainly, the late-night prayer is an act that takes one closer to Allah, keeps one away from sins, expiates for evil deeds and repels disease from the body."[1]

There are many aspects that make the late-night prayer special. First and foremost, it is a prayer. The best action or matter is prayer. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated,

الصَّلاةُ خَيْرُ مَوْضُوعٍ فَمَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ أَنْ يَسْتَكْثِرَ فَلْيَسْتَكْثِرَ

"The prayer is the best matter. Whoever can increase [his prayers] should do so."[2]

Second, al-Haitami points out that, in general, the prayer said in the late-night is more virtuous than the voluntary prayers during the day because it is further from ostentation and being done for show. In other words, the intention behind the late-night prayer should be a pure one. Furthermore, it is easy to have the fear of Allah and concentrate on the prayer in the late-night prayer as there are fewer disturbances at that time.[3]

This is perhaps one of the greatest aspects of the late-night prayers. It increases one's sincerity to Allah. The Follower Qataada said, "They used to say that the hypocrite would not spend the night up [in prayer]."[4] It also makes the person realize his real purpose and goal in this life. He is getting up in the middle of the night and forsaking his sleep because he realizes that his goal is not the pleasure or relaxation of this world. Instead, he has a much greater purpose and goal in life. For that reason, he is getting up to pray when the rest of mankind— especially those whose only concern is this life— are either sleeping or committing sins under the cover of night.

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[1] Recorded by al-Tirmidhi. According to al-Hilaali, it is *hasan*. See al-Hilaali, *Eeqaadh*, p. 412. Al-Albaani also called it *hasan*, as quoted in al-Affaani, vol. 1, p. 162. Al-Affaani goes on to discuss the positive effects of *Salat al-Taraweeh* on the spinal cord. This was presented in a paper at the Conference on Medical Miracles in the Quran in Cairo, Egypt. See al-Affaani, vol. 1, pp. 163f.

[2] Recorded by al-Tabaraani in *al-Ausat*. According to al-Suyooti and al-Albaani, it is *hasan*. See al-Affaani, vol. 1, p. 17.

[3] Cf., al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 225.

[4] Quoted by al-Affaani, vol. 1, p. 19.

"Shall I not inform you of the head of the matter…"

According to ibn Rajab, the "matter" here is in reference to the religion itself with which the Prophet (peace be upon him) was sent.[1] But it seems more apparent, in this context, that the matter is more specifically that of entering Paradise and escaping the Hell-fire. This is al-Haitami's explanation. He says the "matter" is "the matter that you asked about."[2]

The Prophet (peace be upon him) is continuing his answer as to how to enter Paradise and remain away from Hell. He first began by stating the minimum that it takes to enter Paradise. Then he stated how one moves beyond that to the doors of good in Paradise. Now he is summarizing the whole matter with the forthcoming instruction.

"The head of the matter is submission [to Allah]."

The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated that the head, meaning the most important and essential aspect, of the matter is *islaam*. Al-Baitaar states that the meaning of *islaam* here, in particular, is submission and obedience to Allah.[3] In another narration, it states that the head of the matter is the testimony of faith. Ibn Rajab explains that by saying that the one who does not accept and apply the testimony of faith, both internally and externally, has no portion of Islam whatsoever.[4]

Submission to Allah or adherence to the testimony of faith is the head of the matter and plays a role similar to the head of a human body. Without a head, there is no life. Similarly, without this head, there is no Islam. There is no hope, in other words, of escaping the Hell-fire and entering Paradise.[5]

This is the head of the matter. Everything is secondary to this primary issue. If this issue is not first fulfilled properly, the hope of attaining Paradise can be forgotten.

"Its pillar is the prayer."

The foundation upon which the religion, submission to Allah and being entered into Paradise rests is the prayer. A pillar is an upright support for a building or structure to rest. Without proper pillar support, the structure is not sound and can easily be destroyed.

This statement of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is just a fraction of much evidence demonstrating the importance of the prayer. The place of prayer in Islam cannot be denied. As was discussed in the commentary to Hadith #3, the opinion of many scholars— and it seems to be the strongest opinion, Allah knows best— is that the one who does not pray falls outside of the fold of Islam. In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) made it clear that the one who does not attend to his prayers is missing the foundation and the pillar that can save him from the Hell-fire.

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[1] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 145.
[2] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 225.
[3] Al-Baitaar, p. 177.
[4] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 145.
[5] Cf., ibn Daqeeq al-Eid, *Sharh*, p. 78.

"Its apex is jihad."

Al-Haitami states that jihad is the highest form of obedience because it is through it that Islam becomes dominant over all the other religions and ways of life. This is not true for the other acts of worship. Therefore, in this particular respect, it is the greatest act of worship.[1] Al-Baitaar further points out that it is through jihad that the religion is protected and preserved as is also the honor of the Muslims protected. Although every act of worship has its great importance, the place of jihad is of special importance.[2]

Jihad, therefore, is considered the most important deed after the obligatory acts, as Imam Ahmad and others have stated.[3] This statement most probably is in reference to the pillars of Islam vis-a-vis the non-obligatory, recommended jihad.

There are times when jihad is obligatory. Although that is the case, there is no excuse for emphasizing jihad while ignoring the pillars of Islam. The pillars form the foundation of Islam, as discussed in Hadith Number 3, and without these pillars one cannot expect one's jihad to be the complete jihad or completely pleasing to Allah.

The Importance of Jihad

The importance of jihad can be seen in numerous verses of the Quran and statements of the Prophet (peace be upon him). This is not surprising given that it is the apex or highest point of entry into Paradise and being saved from the Hell-fire, as the present hadith demonstrates.

The verses from the Quran concerning jihad include:

لَّا يَسْتَوِى ٱلْقَٰعِدُونَ مِنَ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ غَيْرُ أُو۟لِى ٱلضَّرَرِ وَٱلْمُجَٰهِدُونَ فِى
سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ بِأَمْوَٰلِهِمْ وَأَنفُسِهِمْ ۚ فَضَّلَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْمُجَٰهِدِينَ بِأَمْوَٰلِهِمْ وَأَنفُسِهِمْ
عَلَى ٱلْقَٰعِدِينَ دَرَجَةً ۚ وَكُلًّا وَعَدَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْحُسْنَىٰ ۚ وَفَضَّلَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْمُجَٰهِدِينَ

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[1] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 226.

[2] Al-Baitaar, p. 178.

[3] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 146.

عَلَى ٱلْقَٰعِدِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٩٥﴾ دَرَجَٰتٍ مِّنْهُ وَمَغْفِرَةً وَرَحْمَةً ۚ وَكَانَ ٱللَّهُ
غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا

"Those of the believers who sit still, other than those who have a (disabling) hurt, are not equal with those who strive in the way of Allah with their wealth and lives. Allah has conferred on those who strive with their wealth and lives a rank above the sedentary. Unto each Allah has promised good. But He has bestowed on those who strive a great reward above the sedentary: Degrees of rank from Him, and forgiveness and mercy. Allah is ever Forgiving, Merciful" (*al-Nisaa* 95-96).

أَجَعَلْتُمْ سِقَايَةَ ٱلْحَآجِّ وَعِمَارَةَ ٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْحَرَامِ كَمَنْ ءَامَنَ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلْيَوْمِ
ٱلْءَاخِرِ وَجَٰهَدَ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ ۚ لَا يَسْتَوُۥنَ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِى ٱلْقَوْمَ
ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴿١٩﴾ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَهَاجَرُوا۟ وَجَٰهَدُوا۟ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ بِأَمْوَٰلِهِمْ
وَأَنفُسِهِمْ أَعْظَمُ دَرَجَةً عِندَ ٱللَّهِ ۚ وَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْفَآئِزُونَ

"Count you the quenching of a pilgrim's thirst and tending of the Inviolable Place of Worship as (equal to the worth of him) who believes in Allah and the Last Day, and strives in the Way of Allah? They are not equal in the sight of Allah. Allah guides not wrongdoing folk. Those who believe and have left their homes and striven with their wealth and their lives in Allah's way are of much greater worth in Allah's sight. These are they who are triumphant" (*al-Tauba* 19-20).

إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُحِبُّ ٱلَّذِينَ يُقَٰتِلُونَ فِى سَبِيلِهِۦ صَفًّا كَأَنَّهُم بُنْيَٰنٌ
مَّرْصُوصٌ

"Lo Allah loves those who battle for His cause in ranks, as if they were a solid structure" (*al-Saff* 4).

The following hadith touch upon this topic:

جَاءَ رَجُلٌ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ دُلَّنِي عَلَى عَمَلٍ يَعْدِلُ الْجِهَادَ قَالَ
لا أَجِدُهُ قَالَ هَلْ تَسْتَطِيعُ إِذَا خَرَجَ الْمُجَاهِدُ أَنْ تَدْخُلَ مَسْجِدَكَ فَتَقُومَ وَلا تَفْتُرَ

وَتَصُومَ وَلَا تُفْطِرَ قَالَ وَمَنْ يَسْتَطِيعُ ذَلِكَ قَالَ أَبُو هُرَيْرَةَ إِنَّ فَرَسَ الْمُجَاهِدِ لَيَسْتَنُّ فِي

طِوَلِهِ فَيُكْتَبُ لَهُ حَسَنَاتٍ

[Abu Huraira related that] a man came to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and said, "O Messenger of Allah, show me a deed that is equal to jihad." The Prophet (peace be upon him) told him, "I do not find such a deed." Then he told him, "Can you, while the Muslim fighter is in the battlefield, enter your mosque to perform prayers without ceasing and fast while never breaking your fast?" The man said, "Who could do that?" The Prophet (peace be upon him) told him, "The one who makes jihad is rewarded even for the footsteps of his horse while it wanders about for grazing while tied on a long rope." (Recorded by al-Bukhari.)

Abu Saeed al-Khudri narrated that a man came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said, "O Allah's messenger, who is the best among the people?" The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

مُؤْمِنٌ يُجَاهِدُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِنَفْسِهِ وَمَالِهِ

"A believer who strives his utmost in Allah's cause with his life and property." (Recorded by al-Bukhari.)

In addition to the above, the negative results of abandoning jihad have been made very clear by the Prophet (peace be upon him). Perhaps these are other reasons why the Prophet (peace be upon him) has stated that jihad is the apex of the matter of entering Paradise and escaping the Hell-fire.

The following are some of the negative results of abandoning jihad:

(1) The abandonment of jihad is a source of destruction in both this life and in the Hereafter. With respect to this life, if people do not make an effort to propagate and defend what they believe in, they will be subjugated and despised by others and will not be able to live freely. With respect to the Hereafter, the person who does not perform jihad will not be deserving of Allah's mercy and he will actually be destroying himself. Allah says,

وَأَنفِقُوا۟ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ وَلَا تُلْقُوا۟ بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى ٱلتَّهْلُكَةِ ۛ وَأَحْسِنُوٓا۟ ۛ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ

يُحِبُّ ٱلْمُحْسِنِينَ

"Spend your wealth for the cause of Allah, and be not cast by your own hands to ruin; and do good. Lo, Allah loves the beneficent" (*al-Baqara* 195).

This verse was explained by Abu Ayyoob al-Ansaari. When the Muslims were trying to penetrate the enemy's ranks at Constantinople, some of them said that they were not supposed to kill themselves by their own hands. Abu Ayyoob said, "We are more knowledgeable [than others] about this verse.

It was revealed concerning us, the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). We participated in the battles with the Prophet (peace be upon him) and Allah aided us. Then when Islam spread and we were victorious, we said, 'Allah has honored us by being Companions of the Prophet and He aided him until Islam spread and its adherents were many. We sacrificed our time with our families, wealth and children. Now, the burden of war is over and we should return to our families and children and spend our time with them.' Then Allah revealed concerning us, 'Spend your wealth for the cause of Allah, and be not cast by your own hands to ruin; and do good. Lo, Allah loves the beneficent.'"[1] Thus, by abandoning spending in the way of Allah and, therefore, jihad, the person is actually destroying himself by his own hands.

(2) The abandonment of jihad is a reason for humiliation and disdain. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

لَئِنْ تَرَكْتُمُ الْجِهَادَ وَأَخَذْتُمْ بِأَذْنَابِ الْبَقَرِ وَتَبَايَعْتُمْ بِالْعِينَةِ لَيُلْزِمَنَّكُمُ اللَّهُ مَذَلَّةً فِي رِقَابِكُمْ
لا تَنْفَكُّ عَنْكُمْ حَتَّى تَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَتَرْجِعُوا عَلَى مَا كُنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ

"Surely, If you abandon the jihad and spend all of your time with your agriculture and you deal in *al-eenah*[2], then Allah will make humiliation accompany you and not allow you to be rid of it until you repent to Allah and return to your original state [before this condition]."[3] Al-Ulyaani wrote,

> What the Messenger (peace be upon him), who does not speak from his own desires, stated is certainly true. If anyone looks to the situation of the Muslims today, who are heedless of the most important aspects of their religion as they have abandoned the jihad against the unbelievers and taking the *jizyah*[4] from them, he will see that Allah has inflicted them with humiliation as they turn to the unbelievers of the East or the unbelievers of the West, seeking aid and honor from them, and they do not even realize that this humility will never leave them until they return to their religion as the most honest speaker [the Prophet (peace be upon him)] has stated in this hadith. If they continue in their present state they can be given the same tidings that Allah has given them [when He said], "Bear unto the hypocrites the tidings that for them there is a

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[1] Cf, Ibn Katheer, *Tafseer al-Quran al-Adheem* (Kuwait: Dar al-Arqam, 1985), vol. 1, pp. 402-403.

[2] *Al-Eenah* is a type of business deal that implicitly involves interest (*riba*) although outwardly it seems to be void of it.

[3] Recorded by Ahmad. Ahmad al-Banna wrote, "I have not found this hadith with such a wording except in Ahmad's collection and its chain is good. Abu Dawood, ibn Maajah and al-Baihaqi related the same hadith with a different wording but with the same meaning... And the hadith has a lot of supporting evidence." Al-Banna, vol. 15, pp. 44-45.

[4] *Jizyah* is a poll-tax that non-Muslim residents of the Islamic state pay in lieu of military service.

> painful doom; Those who choose disbelievers for their patrons instead of believers. Do they look for power at their hands? Lo, all power belongs to Allah” [*al-Nisaa* 138-139].[1]

(3) The abandonment of jihad is also a source of calamity, affliction and trials. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

إِذَا تَبَايَعْتُمْ بِالْعِينَةِ وَأَخَذْتُمْ أَذْنَابَ الْبَقَرِ وَرَضِيتُمْ بِالزَّرْعِ وَتَرَكْتُمُ الْجِهَادَ سَلَّطَ اللَّهُ
عَلَيْكُمْ ذُلاًّ لا يَنْزِعُهُ حَتَّى تَرْجِعُوا إِلَى دِينِكُمْ

“If you begin to participate in *al-eenah*, take after the tails of cows, become pleased with agriculture and leave jihad in the way of Allah, Allah will inflict upon you a disgrace that will not leave you until you return to their religion.”[2]

(4) The abandonment of jihad can also be a source of punishment from Allah. Allah says in the Quran,

إِلَّا تَنفِرُوا۟ يُعَذِّبْكُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا وَيَسْتَبْدِلْ قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ وَلَا تَضُرُّوهُ
شَيْـًٔا ۗ وَٱللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

“If you go not forth [for jihad] He will afflict you with a painful doom, and will choose instead of you a folk other than you. You cannot harm Him at all. Allah has power over all things” (*al-Tauba* 39).

Jihad, in one of its many forms or another, will always exist and be a communal imperative. The reality of this world is that every human falls into one of two groups or parties: the party that follows the messengers of Allah (called “the party of Allah”) and the party that refuses to believe in and follow the messengers whom Allah had sent for their own benefit (this group is called “the party of Satan”).

The relation between these two parties is one of enmity. Satan, the leader of the forces of evil, swore to mislead mankind until the Day of Judgment. Allah says,

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[1] Ali al-Ulyaani, *Ahamiyat al-Jihaad* (Riyadh: Daar Taiba, 1985), p. 248.

[2] Recorded by Ahmad, Abu Dawood and others. Ahmad al-Banna stated, "Recorded by Abu Dawood and al-Tabaraani. The narrators of Ahmad's hadith are all trustworthy and ibn al-Qattaan stated the hadith to be *sahih.* And the hadith has many other hadith and chains supporting and strengthening it." Al-Banna, vol. 14, p. 27. Al-Albaani also says this hadith is *sahih.* al-Albaani, *Silsilat al-Ahadith al-Sahiha*, vol. 1, pp. 15.

قَالَ فَبِمَآ أَغۡوَيۡتَنِي لَأَقۡعُدَنَّ لَهُمۡ صِرَٰطَكَ ٱلۡمُسۡتَقِيمَ ١٦ ثُمَّ لَأٓتِيَنَّهُم مِّنۢ بَيۡنِ أَيۡدِيهِمۡ وَمِنۡ خَلۡفِهِمۡ وَعَنۡ أَيۡمَٰنِهِمۡ وَعَن شَمَآئِلِهِمۡۖ وَلَا تَجِدُ أَكۡثَرَهُمۡ شَٰكِرِينَ

"He [the Satan] said: Now, because you have sent me astray, verily I shall lurk in ambush for them on Your Right Path. Then I shall come upon them from before them and from behind them and from their right and from their left, and You will not find most of them beholden (unto You)" (*al-Araaf* 16-17).

Furthermore, unbelievers, in general, will never be satisfied and will never rest until they eradicate as many forms of true obedience and worship of Allah as they can. Allah clearly states,

وَلَا يَزَالُونَ يُقَٰتِلُونَكُمۡ حَتَّىٰ يَرُدُّوكُمۡ عَن دِينِكُمۡ إِنِ ٱسۡتَطَٰعُواْۚ

"And they will not cease from fighting against you till they have made you renegades from your religion, if they are able to do so" (*al-Baqara* 217).

Therefore, the only way that Allah's law, justice, right and truth will prevail on this earth is if the believers in Allah sacrifice their time, wealth and souls for the establishment of truth. In other words, Muslims must participate in jihad until the Day of Judgment since the ungodly forces will not rest until that time.

"Shall I not inform you of what controls that?..."

In previous hadith of al-Nawawi's collection, the importance of speaking good things and refraining from evil speech has been discussed. However, in these final words of teachings to Muaadh, the Prophet (peace be upon him) goes far beyond the aspects that were previously mentioned. Commenting on this part of the hadith, ibn Rajab stated, "This indicates that restraining, controlling and withholding one's tongue is the foundation of all good. The one who controls his tongue controls, restrains and commands all of his affairs."[1] Hence, as Sultaan points out, the one who has been given control over his tongue and speech has been given a great blessing indeed. It is the key to happiness in both this world and the Hereafter.[2]

The meaning of what the Prophet (peace be upon him) tells Muaadh in this portion of the hadith is that, in general, it is because of the deeds of one's tongue that one is thrown into the Hell-fire.[1] Someone might wonder why this is the case. Can the deeds of the tongue be that great and that harmful? Ibn Rajab has explained how that is the case. He wrote,

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[1] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 146.

[2] Sultaan, p. 261.

> The sins of speech include *shirk* (associating partners with Allah). This is the greatest sin in Allah's sight. It also includes speaking about Allah without knowledge, which is the companion of *shirk*. It also includes giving false witness, which can be equivalent to *shirk*. It also includes sorcery, calumny and other major and minor sins, such as lying, backbiting, tale-spreading. In fact, the other sinful acts, in general, are usually accompanied by speech that assists in those deeds.[2]

Given ibn Rajab's explanation, it is simple to understand how the ability or lack of ability to controls one's tongue is directly related to one's entrance into Paradise or into the Hell-fire. Note the following hadith also,

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ سُئِلَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَنْ أَكْثَرِ مَا يُدْخِلُ النَّاسَ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَالَ تَقْوَى اللَّهِ وَحُسْنُ الْخُلُقِ وَسُئِلَ عَنْ أَكْثَرِ مَا يُدْخِلُ النَّاسَ النَّارَ فَقَالَ الْفَمُ وَالْفَرْجُ

On the authority of Abu Huraira who said: The Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked about what most enters a people into Paradise and he said, "*Taqwa* of Allah and good character." Then he was asked about what most enters a people into Hell and he said, "The mouth and the private part."[3]

Concerning the tongue, Ibn Buraidah stated that he one time saw ibn Abbas taking hold of his tongue and then saying, "Woe to you. Speak well and you will gain from that. Refrain from speaking evil and you will be safe. Otherwise, you must realize that you will have to be remorseful."[4]

The early scholar Yahya ibn Katheer said, "A person's speech is not made sound except that it is reflected in the rest of his deeds. And a person's speech is not made wicked except that it is reflected in the rest of his deeds."[5] Yoonus ibn Ubaid, another early scholar, also said, "One will not find any act of piety that is followed by all other acts except in the tongue. You can find a man who fasts during the day and breaks his fast on forbidden things [because of his speech]. He spends the night in prayer and during the day he gives false witness…" [He mentioned a number of aspects and then said,] "However, you will not find a person who only speaks the truth whose actions ever contradict that."[1]

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[1] Al-Haitami states that the hadith is simply stating the general case and does not mean that such is the only reason that one may be thrown into Hell. He likens the speech to the statement, "The pilgrimage is Arafah," meaning the most important aspect of it. See al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 227.

[2] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 147.

[3] Recorded by al-Tirmidhi, Ahmad, ibn Maajah, al-Haakim and ibn Hibbaan. According to al-Hilaali, the hadith is *hasan*. See al-Hilaali, *Eeqaadh*, p. 278.

[4] Quoted in ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 148.

[5] Quoted in ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 149.

Ibn Taimiya noted how difficult it is for people to control their tongues even though they are able to control many of their actions. He stated,

> It is amazing how it is easy for a human to control and protect himself from eating forbidden items, wronging others, fornication, stealing, drinking alcohol, looking at what is forbidden while it is difficult for him to control the movement of his tongue. You can even find a man who is considered religious, pious and a worshipper while he speaks words that anger Allah and he does not even considered them important; he is lowered by one speech a distance even greater than what is between the East and West. How many times do you see a person who refrains from the lewd acts and wrongdoing while his tongue flows in false speech concerning the honor of those both alive and dead, and he does not even care about what he is saying.[2]

Abdul Maalik al-Qaasim notes how in this day and age, one truly has to be careful about this matter. Nowadays, first, the level of piety or religious awareness seems to be less than in the past. To add to that, many Muslims today seem to have much more free time than they did in the past, due to modern day conveniences and ease of life. This free time can be very dangerous as it allows more opportunity for people to sit and talk for hours at a time. People may be able to speak in a good manner for some time, but, after a while, they have a tendency to stray into matters that they should have avoided. Al-Zuhri noticed this aspect and said, "If the gathering becomes long, then Satan has a portion of it."[3]

In addition, the means of communication, such as telephone, e-mail and so on, makes it even easier to communicate more often with others. All of these have turned out to be very dangerous with respect to a person's words.[4]

Ibn Daqeeq al-Eid points out that this last part of the hadith alludes to another important form of jihad: jihad against the self. This is the jihad or struggling by which a person controls his actions and desires. It is this type of jihad that is needed to control one's speech. Without this type of jihad, as this hadith clearly demonstrates, the results can be disastrous as one may end up being thrown into the Hell-fire.[5]

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[1] Quoted in ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 149.

[2] Quoted in Abdul Maalik al-Qaasim, *Ahsaahu-llaah wa nasooh* (Riyadh: Daar al-Qaasim, 1995), pp. 6-7.

[3] Quoted in Abdul Maalik al-Qaasim, *Ahsaahu*, p. 20.

[4] Cf., Abdul Maalik al-Qaasim, *Ahsaahu-llaah wa nasooh*, p. 2.

[5] Ibn Daqeeq al-Eid, *Sharh*, p. 79.

The key to this jihad is to remember that one will be held responsible for every word that he speaks. As Allah has stated,

مَّا يَلْفِظُ مِن قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ

"Not a word does he utter but there is a watcher by him ready [to record it]" (*Qaaf* 18). Umar ibn Abdul Azeez stated, "The one who realizes that his speech is part of his deeds will restrict his words to only what is of concern to him and is of benefit to him."[1]

Other Points Related to This Hadith

- The "teacher" should express his teachings in such a way that the listener's attention is turned to what he is saying. In this example, the Prophet (peace be upon him) did this more than once by saying, "Shall I not tell you...," "Shall I not inform you..."[2]
- Sultaan points out that this hadith also demonstrates that one should teach in a progressive manner. In other words, one should start with the basics and then move on to more intricate matters after them.[3] This is what the Prophet (peace be upon him) did in this particular hadith.

Summary of the Hadith

- The Companions were very anxious to know the key to entering Paradise and escaping the Hell-fire. Hence, they asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) on numerous occasions to guide them to this goal.
- This question is a great matter. However, if Allah makes it easy for someone, then it will become easy for him.
- The key to entering Paradise is the fulfillment of the five pillars of Islam.
- Beyond entering Paradise, the Prophet (peace be upon him) explained the keys to the great rewards in Paradise. These keys are voluntary fasts, which are a shield, charity and prayers during the late night, which extinguish sins.
- The main aspect of the issue of entering Paradise and escaping Hell is in the submission to Allah. The pillar or the foundation to that submission is prayer. Its apex or loftiest aspect is jihad in the way of Allah.
- Controlling one's tongue is what can control one's acts to lead a person to Paradise and save him from the Hell-fire.
- The greatest reason for people being thrown into the Hell-fire is from the effects of their tongues.

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[1] Quoted in A. al-Qaasim, *Ahsaahu*, p. 13. Al-Auzaa'ee also said something similar to that.
[2] Al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 208.
[3] Sultaan, p. 261.

Hadith #30
“Allah has Prescribed the Obligatory Deeds...”

عَنْ أَبِي ثَعْلَبَةَ الخُشَنِيِّ جُرْثُوْمِ بْنِ نَاشِرٍ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ عَنْ رَسُوْلِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ إِنَّ اللهَ تَعَالَى فَرَضَ فَرَائِضَ فَلاَ تُضَيِّعُوهَا وَحَدَّ حُدُوْداً فَلاَ تَعْتَدُوهَا وَحَرَّمَ أَشْيَاءَ فَلاَ تَنْتَهِكُوهَا وَسَكَتَ عَنْ أَشْيَاءَ رَحْمَةً لَكُمْ غَيْرَ نِسْيَانٍ فَلاَ تَبْحَثُوا عَنْهَا

حَدِيْثٌ حَسَنٌ رَوَاهُ الدَّارَقُطْنِيُّ وَغَيْرُهُ

On the authority of Abu Thalaba al-Khushani Jurthoom ibn Naashir (may Allah be pleased with him): On the authority of the Messenger of Allah (Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him) who said, “Verily, Allah, the Exalted, has prescribed the obligatory deeds, so do not neglect them. He has set the limits, so do not go beyond them. He has forbidden some things, so do not violate them. And He has been silent about some things, out of mercy upon you and not out of forgetfulness, so do not seek after them.”
A *hasan* hadith recorded by al-Daaraqutni and others.

Selected Vocabulary

فرض	- “he has made obligatory”
فرائض	- “obligatory deeds”
تضيّعوها	- “neglect them,” the ها at the end is the female pronoun for the plural of things. The literal meaning of the word is close to, “lose, waste.” So the meaning is actually, “Do not abandon those acts or be lazy concerning them such that their time passes and they are lost.”
حدّ	- “he set”
حدود	- “limits, boundaries”
تعتدوها	- “transgress them, overstep them, go beyond them,” again the ها at the end is the female pronoun in reference to the plural of things.
أشياء	- “things,” plural of شيء
سكت	- “he was silent”
رحمة	- “mercy”

نسيان	- "forgetfulness"
تبحثوا	- "you seek, search"

Takhreej

This hadith has been recorded through different chains as pictured in Figure 30.1.

This hadith was recorded by al-Daaraqutni, al-Baihaqi, al-Khateeb in *al-Faqeeh wa al-Mutafaqih*, al-Haakim, ibn Battah al-Akbari in *al-Ibaanah*, ibn al-Jauzi in *Dhamm al-Hawa*, Abu Nuaim, al-Dhakwaani, al-Tai and ibn al-Samaak. They all recorded this hadith through the chain of Dawood ibn Abu Hind on the authority of Makhool from Abu Thalaba. The narrators in these chains are, in general, of *sahih* quality.

The problem, however, with this chain is the link between Makhool and Abu Thalaba. The majority of the scholars, including Abu Zura and Abu Haatim, state that Makhool did not hear hadith from Abu Thalaba.[1] But, as al-Haitami points out, ibn Maeen disagreed with them. He said that Makhool did hear hadith from Abu Thalaba.[2] The general rule in a case like this is that the claim of affirmation takes precedence over the negation. This is because the scholar who affirms the narration must have access to some knowledge that affirms that the one scholar heard from the other. The information that he is relying upon was probably unknown to the other scholars. This is why they deny the connection between the two.

This, though, does not solve the problem with the chain at that point. If Makhool did hear from Abu Thalaba, there is a new problem. This problem is that Makhool was known for committing *tadlees*.[3] He has been classified by ibn Hajr and others as being from the third category of those who commit *tadlees*.[4] This means that his hadith will not be accepted on their own unless he uses an unequivocal term showing that he heard the hadith directly from the source he stated. In this particular chain, he used the word *an* ("on the authority of").

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[1] See ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 150. Ibn Rajab points out a second defect with this hadith. Sometimes it is narrated as a statement of Abu Thalaba rather than a hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him). However, that problem is inconsequential since the scholars of hadith have determined that the correct narration is that going back to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and not stopping at Abu Thalaba.

[2] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 230.

[3] *Tadlees* is where a person narrates a hadith from one of his teachers but the particular hadith he is narrating he did not hear directly from his teacher but through an intermediate source. The narrator uses the ambiguous word *an* (عن, "on the authority of"). This term is ambiguous because, lexically, it does not deny or confirm that he heard it directly from his teacher. Technically speaking, the person is not lying but he is doing something that is very bad in the eyes of the scholars of hadith, since it makes it unclear if the chain is missing any narrators or not. If a person is accused of committing *tadlees*, then, in general, his hadith will not be accepted unless he uses a term that explicitly demonstrates that he heard the hadith directly from his teacher and not possibly from an intermediate source.

[4] Cf., Misfur al-Dumaini, *al-Tadlees fi al-Hadeeth* (Published by its author, 1992), pp. 352-355.

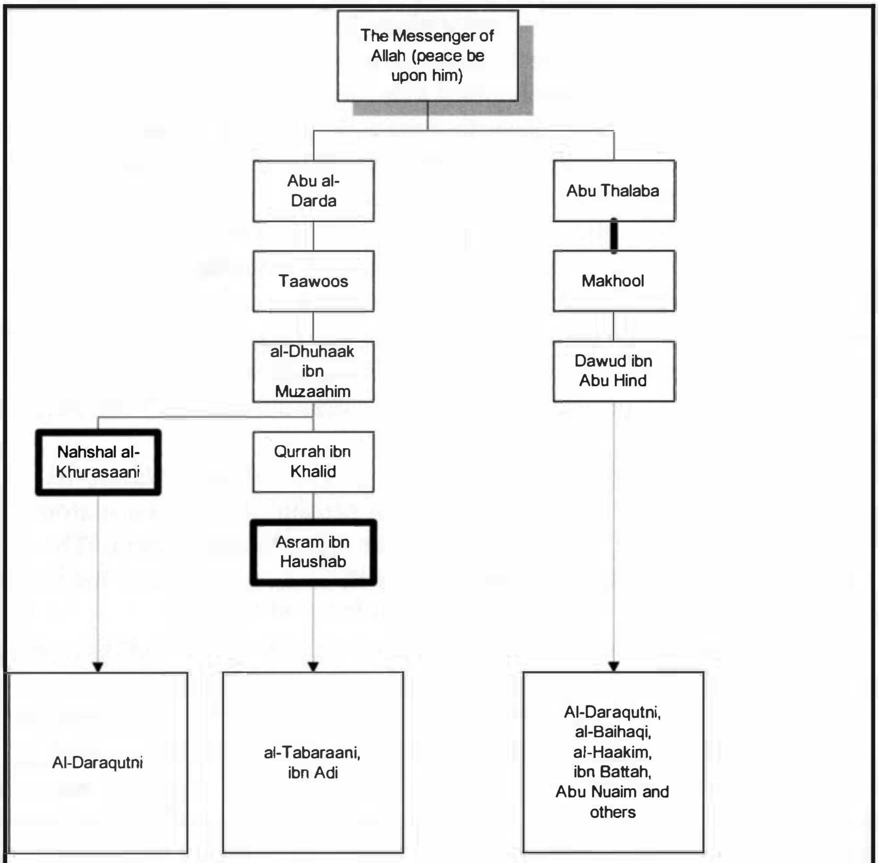
The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him)
Abu al-Darda
Abu Thalaba
Taawoos
Makhool
al-Dhuhaak ibn Muzaahim
Dawud ibn Abu Hind
Nahshal al-Khurasaani
Qurrah ibn Khalid
Asram ibn Haushab
Al-Daraqutni
al-Tabaraani, ibn Adi
Al-Daraqutni, al-Baihaqi, al-Haakim, ibn Battah, Abu Nuaim and others

Figure 30.1 The chains for Hadith Number 30

Key: Heavy black connecting line indicates problem at that link; heavy box indicates problem with that narrator; dotted line with arrow means narrators intentionally left out for presentation purposes only

Therefore, either this chain is broken between Makhool and Abu Thalaba or, if that is not the case, there is a problem with Makhool's *tadlees* and his use of the word *an* here.[1] Hence, this particular chain is not acceptable on its own. It is in need of corroborating evidence to be considered an acceptable hadith.

There is another possible problem with this chain that seems to have gone unnoticed by those who commented on this hadith. The hadith is narrated through Dawood ibn Abu Hind. There is no doubt that he is a trustworthy narrator. Ibn Hibban noted that he used to make a few mistakes but not enough to reject his hadith. However, according to ibn Hajr and al-Dhahabi, toward the end of his life he became somewhat senile or lost some of his proficiency and began to make mistakes in his narration of hadith.[2]

Dawood died in the year 139 or 140 A.H. and it is said that he was 75 years old.[3] In *Sunan al-Daaraqutni*, for example, the narrator who narrated this hadith from Dawood was Ishaaq al-Azraq. Ishaaq was born in the year 117.[4] Assuming he started recording hadith at the young age of 15, Dawood must have been at least in his late sixties before Ishaaq could have studied and heard hadith from him. By that time, Dawood's retentive abilities may not have been what they were earlier in his life.

Another example is the narration in al-Haakim's *Mustadrak*.[5] The narrator from Dawood in that case is Ali ibn Mushir. Ali was born around the year 120 A.H.[6] This was three years later than Ishaaq's birth. The same argument could be made concerning when he must have heard hadith from Dawood ibn Abu Hind.

This fact, again, casts further doubt on this particular hadith, especially if this is the only somewhat strong chain of this hadith.[7] Allah knows best.

The hadith has been narrated through other chains, as can be seen in Figure 30.1. It is recorded as a hadith of Abu al-Darda by al-Tabaraani in *al-Mujam al-Sagheer* and ibn Adi. But that narration goes through Asram ibn Haushab. Both Al-Tabaraani and ibn Adi stated that the only one who narrated it on Qurrah's authority was Asram.[8] Yahya ibn Maeen called Asram, "a liar, an evil person." Al-Bukhari, Muslim and al-Nasaai all called him abandoned (*matrook* متروك). Al-Daaraqutni said that his hadith are rejected. Ibn Hibban even stated that he would fabricate hadith and supposedly narrate them on the authority of trustworthy narrators.[1] Ibn Adi called this hadith *baatil* (باطل) or false.[2] A chain of this nature is completely unacceptable as supporting or corroborating evidence. It is as if it were non-existent.

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[1] Judging by what is written about Makhool, it is most likely the case that the chain is broken and it is not a problem of *tadlees*. Makhool did not meet many Companions and he was well-known for not giving the complete chains for his reports. See Abdul Rahmaan ibn Abu Haatim al-Raazi, *Kitaab al-Maraaseel* (Beirut: Daar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1983), pp. 165-166; Salaah al-Deen Khaleel al-Alaai, *Jaami al-Tahseel fi Ahkaam al-Maraaseel* (Beirut: Aalim al-Kitaab, 1986), pp. 285-286.

[2] See Bishaar Maroof's footnotes to Yusuf al-Mizi, *Tahdheeb al-Kamaal fi Asmaa al-Rijaal* (Beirut: Muassasat al-Risaalah, 1987), vol. 8, p. 466.

[3] Al-Mizi, vol. 8, p. 466.

[4] al-Dhahabi, *Siyar*, vol. 9, p. 171.

[5] Abu Abdullah al-Haakim, *al-Mustadrak ala al-Saheehain* (Beirut: Daar al-Marifah, n.d.), vol. 4, p. 115.

[6] Al-Dhahabi, *Siyar*, vol. 8, p. 485.

[7] Due to time limitations, this author is not able to research every narrator who narrated this hadith from Dawood. The two discussed above were chosen at random. Since the hadith has a defect that is "not removed," it was not felt necessary to continue this process.

[8] Muhammad Amreed, *Al-Raudh al-Daani ila al-Mujam al-Sagheer lil-Tabaraani* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islaami, 1985), vol. 2, p. 250; ibn Adi, *Al-Kaamil fi Dhuafaa al-Rijaal*, vol. 1, p. 395.

Al-Daaraqutni also records this hadith with a different chain. In Figure 30.1, it can be seen that his chain goes through Nahshal al-Khurasaani. Nahshal is also considered a rejected narrator. The scholar of hadith Ishaaq ibn Rahawaih declared him to be a liar. Abu Haatim and al-Nasaai both said that he is to be abandoned. Yahya and al-Daaraqutni both called him weak. This chain also cannot be accepted for supporting evidence.[3]

One is, therefore, left with only the chain going through Makhool. This chain is defective. Therefore, without any corroborating evidence, the conclusion is that this is a weak hadith. This is the conclusion of al-Albaani[4], al-Hilaali[5] and ibn Muhammad[6].

General Comments About the Hadith

This hadith is a weak hadith. Therefore, there is no need to discuss it in detail. However, it should be pointed out that the commentators on this hadith do not take this hadith at face value. In other words, they do not say that every deed concerning which Allah was silent must be permissible or cannot be asked about or researched. There are many acts possible today that are not mentioned in the Quran or sunnah while it is clear that they could not possibly be permissible or it is equally clear that the ruling for them needs to be researched.

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[1] See Muhammad al-Dhahabi, *Meezaan al-Itidaal fi Naqd al-Rijaal* (Beirut: Daar al-Marifah, n.d.), vol. 1, pp. 272-273; Ahmad ibn Hajr, *Lisaan al-Mizaan* (Beirut: Daar al-Fikr, 1988), vol. 1, pp. 515-516.

[2] Ibn Adi, vol. 1, p. 395.

[3] Adheemabaadi, *Al-Taleeq al-Mughni*, vol. 4, p. 297.

[4] Muhammad Naasir al-Deen al-Albaani, *Ghaayat al-Maraam fi Takhreej Ahadeeth al-Halaal wa al-Haraam* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islaami, 1985), pp. 17-19.

[5] Al-Hilaali, *Eeqaadh*, p. 417.

[6] Ibn Muhammad, pp. 179-182. Ibn Muhammad also discusses other hadith which could be considered supporting evidence for this hadith. However, those other hadith have a difference in meaning that set them apart from this particular hadith. One such hadith from Abu al-Darda states, "What Allah has permitted in His book is permissible and what He has forbidden in His book is forbidden. What He is silent about is pardoned, so accept from Allah what He has pardoned for you. For verily, Allah had not forgotten anything." Then he read the verse, "Your Lord is not forgetful" (*Maryam* 64). This was recorded by al-Haakim and al-Bazzaar. Al-Tirmidhi and ibn Majah have something similar on the authority of Salmaan. Those hadith have a meaning that is very different from the hadith under discussion here. Those hadith make it fairly clear that whatever Allah is silent about is permissible and one should accept it as permissible. The hadith under discussion here says that one should not study or seek those matters that Allah is silent about. This is a completely different teaching. As to be noted below, the commentators understood this to mean asking about such things during the time of the revelation or researching very difficult matters. It does not mean that everything not mentioned in the texts becomes permissible *a priori*. Therefore, those narrations cannot be used as supporting evidence for this particular hadith. Furthermore, although this is not the proper place to discuss them in detail, those other hadith are also weak and unacceptable in this author's opinion. Their chains are problematic and their texts contradict other stronger hadith. Allah knows best.

For this reason, the scholars gave a number of different explanations for the last part of this hadith, "And He has been silent about some things, out of mercy upon you and not out of forgetfulness, so do not seek after them." Al-Baitaar has summed up the three different possible explanations as follows:[1]

(1) The prohibition was something particular for the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him). As was discussed in the commentary to Hadith Number 9, there was a general prohibition of asking the Prophet (peace be upon him) concerning matters that were not yet discussed in the Quran and sunnah.

(2) A second interpretation is that the prohibition is for all times but it is particular with respect to the kinds of research and questioning prohibited. It is only with respect to the difficult, detailed, impractical or irrelevant questions. These are the types of matters that one should not ask about. In general, they do not affect a person's actions and may lead to confusion more than anything else.

(3) The third interpretation is that the prohibition is with respect to the general masses only and not with respect to the scholars. The laymen may get into heated debates and discussions without any fruitful results. They are not the people who should be debating or discussing the issues that are not clearly discussed in the Quran and sunnah. This role is left to the scholars only. It is the scholars' job to research such questions and then to give their conclusions and rulings to the general people.

It should also be noted that this hadith is used by the Dhahiris (Literalists) to support their contention that analogy is not valid and that one must follow the apparent meaning of the texts only. Nonetheless, this is a weak hadith and, therefore, cannot be used to support their contention. In addition, there are many other clear evidences that support the use of analogy and so, even if one assumes that this hadith is authentic, one would be forced to interpret it in such a way that it does not forbid analogy.

About the Narrator: Abu Thalaba

Abu Thalaba came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) to accept Islam when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was about to embark on the Campaign of Khaibar. Abu Thalaba embraced Islam and went along with the Muslims. The Prophet (peace be upon him) gave him a portion of the bounty from the conquest.

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[1] Al-Baitaar, p. 186.

It is also said that he was present at the *Baiat al-Ridhwaan* (the oath of allegiance concerning which Allah declared His pleasure in verse 18 of *surah al-Fath*) during the treaty of Hudaibiyah. During the civil strife that broke out among the Muslims, near the end of Uthmaan's caliphate and afterwards, Abu Thalaba remained away from all of the controversy and did not take part in any of the fighting.

He lived in Greater Syria. He died in the year 75 A.H. while he was in prostration during the late-night prayers. Forty hadith have been narrated on his authority.

Recorded by al-Daaraqutni

Imam al-Daaraqutni

Ali ibn Umar al-Daaraqutni al-Shafi'ee lived from 306 A.H. to 385 A.H. He was born in a part of Baghdad known as Daaraqutn. By the age of ten, he was sitting in the hadith sessions in Baghdad. At an early age, his reputation for having an excellent memory started. He studied hadith intensely and became one of the best scholars in noting the defects and problems in hadith. He was also an expert in the recitation of the Quran. To further his studies of hadith, he traveled to Kufah, Basrah and Wasit. In his later years, he also traveled to Greater Syria and Makkah.

He studied under more than two hundred teachers, including Abu Ishaaq al-Azdi, Abu al-Hasan al-Baghawi and Abu al-Abbaas al-Shaibaani. Those who learned from al-Daaraqutni included Abu Nuaim al-Isfahaani, Abu Bakr al-Barqaani and Abu Taahir al-Diqaaq.

Al-Daaraqutni compiled a number of works. In general, when it is said, "Recorded by al-Daaraqutni," this is in reference to his *Sunan*. His book *al-Dhuafa wa al-Matrookoon* is a compilation of weak and rejected narrators. He also compiled an extensive work on defects in hadith, entitled *al-Ilal al-Waaridah fi al-Ahaadeeth al-Nabawiyyah.* Its current published form is in eleven volumes. Ibn Katheer stated about this book, "It is one of the best books. Indeed, it is the best book that we have seen compiled on this topic. No one before him compiled one like it and no one after him who wanted to has been able to compile anything like it."[1]

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[1] The information concerning al-Daaraqutni has been taken from Mahfoodh al-Salafi's introduction to Ali ibn Umar al-Daaraqutni, *al-Ilal al-Waaridah fi al-Ahadeeth al-Nabawiyah* (Riyadh: Daar Taibah, 1985), vol. 1, pp. 9-20.

Summary of the Hadith

- The conclusion was that this is a weak hadith. Therefore, there is no need to analyze it or understand it in detail.

Hadith #31
"Be Aloof from the World..."

عَنْ أَبِي العَبَّاسِ سَهْلِ بْنِ سَعْدٍ السَّاعِدِيِّ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ
جَاءَ رَجُلٌ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ يَا رَسُوْلَ
اللهِ دُلَّنِي عَلَى عَمَلٍ إِذَا عَمِلْتُهُ أَحَبَّنِي اللهُ وَأَحَبَّنِي النَّاسُ
فَقَالَ ازْهَدْ فِيْ الدُّنْيَا يُحِبَّكَ اللهُ وَازْهَدْ فِيْمَا عِنْدَ النَّاسِ
يُحِبَّكَ النَّاسُ

رَوَاهُ ابْنُ مَاجَه وَغَيْرُهُ بِأَسَانِيْدَ حَسَنَةٍ

On the authority of Abu al-Abbaas Sahl ibn Saad al-Saa'idi (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: A man came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and said, "O Messenger of Allah, direct me to a deed concerning which, if I perform it, Allah will love me and the people will love me." He said, "Be aloof from the world and Allah will love you. Be aloof from what the people possess and the people will love you."
Recorded by ibn Maajah and others with *hasan* chains.

Selected Vocabulary

جاء	- "he came," masculine form
دلني	- "guide me, direct me," the ني at the end indicates, "me"
أحبّني	- "loves me," again the ني at the end indicates, "me"
ازهد	- "be aloof," this is sometimes translated as "renounce" but that is not quite correct. The correct *zuhd* in Islam is not an act of renouncing or giving up the world. It is an act of being aloof from the world, in the sense that one's heart is not attached to the things of this world but to the aspects of the Hereafter and one is indifferent about losing the bounties of this world.

Takhreej

This hadith has been recorded through a number of different chains. They are shown graphically in Figure 31.1.

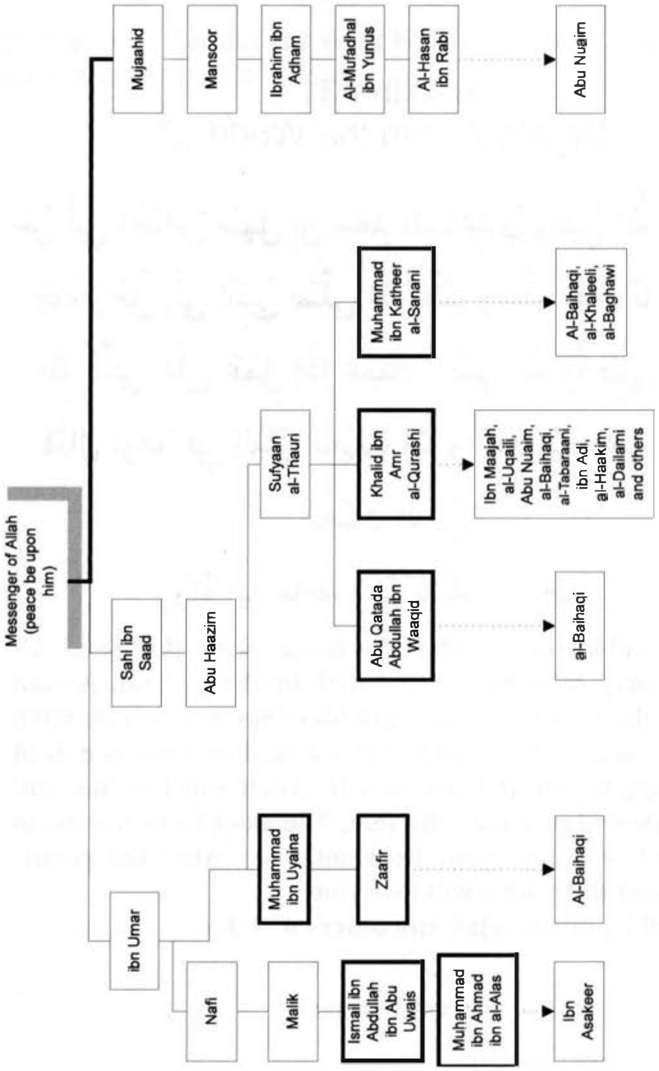
Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him)
Mujaahid
Mansoor
Ibrahim ibn Adham
Al-Mufadhal ibn Yunus
Al-Hasan ibn Rabi
Abu Nuaim
Sahl ibn Saad
Abu Haazim
Sufyaan al-Thauri
Abu Qatada Abdullah ibn Waaqid
al-Baihaqi
Khalid ibn Amr al-Qurashi
Ibn Maajah, al-Uqaili, Abu Nuaim, al-Baihaqi, al-Tabaraani, ibn Adi, al-Haakim, al-Dailami and others
Muhammad ibn Katheer al-Sanani
Al-Baihaqi, al-Khaleeli, al-Baghawi
ibn Umar
Muhammad ibn Uyaina
Zaafir
Al-Baihaqi
Nafi
Malik
Ismail ibn Abdullah ibn Abu Uwais
Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn al-Alas
Ibn Asakeer

Figure 31.1 Chains of Transmission for Hadith Number 31

Key: Heavy lines indicate problem in the link; heavy box indicates problem with the narrator; dotted lines with arrow indicates narrators intentionally not displayed

This hadith was recorded by ibn Maajah, al-Uqaili, Abu Nuaim, al-Haakim, al-Baihaqi in *Shuab al-Imaan*, al-Tabaraani, ibn Adi, al-Dailami and others through the chain of Khalid ibn Amr al-Qurashi on the authority of Sufyaan from Abu Haazim from Sahl ibn Saad. The problem with this chain is Khalid ibn Amr. Ahmad said that he was not trustworthy and al-Bukhari called his hadith rejected, which is one of the harshest terms al-Bukhari ever used. Some scholars stated that he fabricated hadith and Yahya ibn Maeen accused him of being a liar.[1]

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[1] Ibn Muhammad, p. 183. For more about Khaalid, see ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, pp. 174-175, with attention paid to al-Arnaoot's and Baajis' footnotes.

A chain with the above characteristics is a chain that cannot be raised to the level of *hasan* or used to move other hadith to the level of *hasan* due to its grave weakness.

This hadith is also recorded by al-Baihaqi in *Shuab al-Imaan*, al-Khaleeli in *al-Irshaad* and al-Baghawi in *Sharh al-Sunnah.* The chain they have is Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn al-Waleed on the authority of Muhammad ibn Katheer al-Sanaani from Sufyaan al-Thauri from Abu Haazim from Sahl. The problem with this chain is Muhammad ibn Katheer al-Sanaani. Ahmad described him as a very weak and rejected narrator. Al-Bukhari said that he is "very fragile", meaning a weak to very weak narrator. Some did state that he is honest but has lots of mistakes. Ibn Adi pointed out that he has hadith that no one else corroborates. Abu Haatim, the expert on defects in hadith, stated that this hadith is "false" by this chain. Al-Uqaili also stated that this hadith has no source in the hadith of Sufyaan al-Thauri. He says that perhaps Muhammad took it from Khalid discussed earlier, then left his name out of it and narrated it from Sufyaan.[1]

However, there is another narration from Sufyaan that is recorded by al-Baihaqi in *Shuab al-Imaan.* This chain contains Abu Qataada who is also a rejected narrator. Hence, neither this chain or the previous chain can be used as supporting evidence nor can they be supported to make the hadith acceptable.

In *Shuab al-Imaan*, al-Baihaqi has yet another chain for this hadith. This goes through Zaafir ibn Sulaimaan on the authority of Muhammad ibn Uyaina[2] from Abu Haazim from Sahl. It is also narrated from Zaafir from Muhammad ibn Uyaina from ibn Umar. Ibn Muhammad states that the problem with this chain is that both Zaafir and Muhammad ibn Uyaina, although known to be honest, commit lots of mistakes in their reports and cannot be used as evidence.[3] However, here ibn Muhammad is simply repeating what ibn Hajr stated about them in *Taqreeb al-Tahdheeb*, although he did not mention his source for this statement.[4] In *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, a much more detailed work, ibn Hajr mentions that al-Ijli considers Muhammad ibn Uyaina trustworthy but Abu Hatim said, "He cannot be used as an argument because he brings objectionable reports."[5]

Of the two narrators, Zaafir seems to be the weaker. Ibn Hibban stated about him,

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[1] Ibn Muhammad, p. 185.

[2] He was the brother of the more famous Sufyaan ibn Uyaina.

[3] Ibn Muhammad, p. 186.

[4] For Muhammad ibn Uyaina, see Ahmad ibn Hajr, *Taqreeb al-Tahdheeb*, p. 887; for Zaafir ibn Sulaimaan, see ibn Hajr, *Taqreeb*, p. 333.

[5] Ahmad ibn Hajr, *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb* (Hyderabad: Majlis Daairah al-Maarif al-Nidhaamiyah, 1326 A.H.), vol. 9, p. 395. Al-Dhahabi also had the same quote from Abu Haatim and that is all al-Dahabi stated in Muhammad al-Dhahabi, *Al-Mughni fi al-Dhuafaa* (Noor al-Din Itr, ed.), vol. 2, p. 623.

> He had many mistakes in his narrations from Shubah and Malik. He has expansive mistakes in his reports even though he is honest. In my opinion, concerning him, his reports should be considered when they are in agreement with trustworthy narrators. And what he singularly reports should be recorded [so that if supporting evidence is found for it, it can be accepted].[1]

Al-Dhahabi quotes al-Nasaai as stating that he is not a qualified narrator and that he narrates many strange reports from Malik. Al-Dhahabi then quotes al-Saaji as saying that he has many gross mistakes.[2] Finally, ibn Adi stated, "The chains as well as the texts of his hadith have been distorted[3]. Most of what he narrated is not corroborated. His hadith are to be recorded even given his weak status [as supporting evidence may raise them to the level of *hasan*]."[4]

The fact that this hadith is narrated through Muhammad and Zaafir in two different ways is a sign that the hadith has not been preserved properly by at least one of them.[5]

There is yet another chain of this hadith that needs to be dealt with. Abu Nuaim records this hadith with a chain of Ibraaheem ibn Adham from Mansoor from Mujaahid from Anas from the Prophet (peace be upon him). Then Abu Nuaim says that this is not correct. He mentions two narrators later in the chain and says that the mistake must be from one of them. The confirmed narrators narrated this from Ibraaheem from Mansoor from Mujaahid from the Prophet (peace be upon him), without mentioning Anas' name. Hence, the link between Mujaahid and the Prophet (peace be upon him) is missing, making this a weak chain. Abu Nuaim also says that Taaloot mentions it from Ibraaheem without going any further. Then he says, seemingly casting some doubt on the hadith, that as a hadith of Mansoor and Mujaahid, it is rare and what is well-known is what is narrated from Sufyaan from Abu Haazim from Sahl.[6]

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[1] Muhammad ibn Hibbaan, *Kitaab al-Majrooheen min al-Muhaditheen wa al-Dhuafaa wa al-Matrookeen* (Beirut: Daar al-Marifah, 1992), part 2, pp. 317-318.

[2] Al-Dhahabi, *Mizaan*, vol. 2, p. 64.

[3] What he actually said is *maqloobah* (مقلوبة), meaning that sometimes the narrators in the chain were misplaced or the names were stated backwards and also in the text the words were stated in incorrect order.

[4] Ibn Adi, vol. 3, p. 1089.

[5] If the narrator were a great scholar of hadith and known for his many different narrations of hadith, one would conclude that he must have heard the hadith in more than one fashion and passed it on in more than one way. In this case, though, neither of these two narrators are of that quality. Instead, they are known for committing many mistakes. Therefore, when they narrate the same hadith in different ways, it is taken as a sign that this is one of the hadith that they are making a mistake in.

[6] Abu Nuaim Ahmad al-Isbahaani, *Hilyat al-Auliyaa wa Tabaqaat al-Asfiyaa* (Matbaah al-Saadah, 1979), vol. 8, pp. 41-42.

In *Silsilat al-Ahadeeth al-Saheeha*, al-Albaani mentions yet another chain for this hadith.[1] This chain is from *Tareekh Dimishq* by ibn Asakeer. It is the following: Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn al-Alas from Ismaaeel ibn Abdullah ibn Abu Uwais who said, "Narrated to us on the authority of Malik[2] from Nafi from ibn Umar." All al-Albani had to say about this chain is, "The narrators in this chain are narrators from al-Bukhari and Muslim, except for ibn al-Alas as I do not know him."[3] Therefore, this chain contains a completely unknown narrator in Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn al-Alas.[4] That in itself makes this another weak chain.

However, there is something much more damaging in this chain that al-Albaani did not mention. It is not sufficient to say that Ismaaeel ibn Abdullah ibn Abu Uwais, who was Imam Malik's nephew, may be found in either *Sahih al-Bukhari* or *Sahih Muslim*. This does not mean that all of his narrations from any narrator are necessarily acceptable. Some scholars of hadith, such as Yahya ibn Maeen, declared him to be weak. In fact, al-Nasaai abandoned him completely. However, the most compelling point is what ibn Adi concluded about him, "He narrated from his uncle Malik strange hadith that no one else corroborates."[5] The hadith under question here is one of his narrations from Imam Malik concerning which no one else seems to have narrated from Imam Malik. Hence, this chain contains a completely unknown narrator as well as a narrator who, in this particular case, cannot be considered acceptable.

The conclusion is that the strongest chain for this hadith is that of Abu Nuaim, wherein the chain is broken between Mujaahid and the Prophet (peace be upon him). Hence, it must be considered a weak hadith. Al-Hilaali also concluded that this hadith is weak.[6] It seems that ibn Hajr did not accept the idea of calling this hadith *hasan.*[7] Al-Husaini stated that "it is said that it is very weak but the correct opinion is that it has weakness."[8] Ibn Muhammad called it *munkar* ("rejected"), which is a very weak type of weak hadith.[9] Ibn Muhammad's judgment must be considered an overstatement as the worse that can be said about this hadith is that it is a hadith with a broken chain.

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[1] It is very strange that ibn Muhammad mentions al-Albaani's discussion as a reference yet he does not discuss or mention this upcoming chain at all.

[2] This is the way that al-Albaani reproduced this chain. Unfortunately, ibn Asakeer's work is not available to this author. The way the chain is reproduced in al-Albaani's work, if it is not a misprint, casts some doubt as to whom Ismaaeel received this hadith from. This would cast further doubt upon this chain.

[3] Al-Albaani, *Silsilat al-Ahadeeth al-Saheeha*, vol. 2, p. 663.

[4] This author also could not find his biography in any of the standard works.

[5] For more details about him, see al-Mizi, vol. 3, pp. 124-129.

[6] Al-Hilaali, *Eeqaadh*, p. 418.

[7] See the statement by al-Sakhaawi, ibn Hajr's student, in al-Sakhaawi, p. 106.

[8] Muhammad al-Husaini al-Taraabilisi, *Al-Kashf al-Ilaahi an Shadeed al-Dhaf wa al-Maudhu wa al-Waahi* (Makkah: Maktaba al-Taalib al-Jaamiee, 1987), vol. 1, p. 91.

[9] Ibn Muhammad, p. 183.

General Comments About the Hadith

This hadith is a weak hadith. Therefore, it will not be discussed in detail. However, a few points concerning the correct understanding of *zuhd* ("Islamic asceticism") are in order.

First, *zuhd* does not imply abandoning this world and not working for one's needs in this world. The early scholar Abu Idrees al-Khaulaani said, "*Zuhd* in this world does not mean forbidding what is permissible or wasting wealth. *Zuhd* with respect to this world is only where a person puts more trust in what is with Allah than what is in his own hand. If he is afflicted with a calamity [by losing something of this world], he is more hopeful for its reward and what is stored for him in the Hereafter than if it were to have remained with him."[1] Two important concepts are mentioned in this statement and both of them are dealing with the actions of the heart. This is because *zuhd* is an action of the heart and not an outward action. Sulaimaan al-Daaraani said, "Do not testify that anyone has *zuhd* for *zuhd* is in the heart [and cannot be witnessed by others]."[2]

The first aspect mentioned is where a person realizes that all provisions and sustenance come from Allah and not simply by his own acts. The second aspect is where, if a person loses anything of this world, this does not bother him because he is looking toward the Hereafter and not this world.

Wahb ibn al-Warad said, "*Zuhd* in this world is where one does not despair because of what he missed in this world nor does he rejoice because of what he is given of this world." Sufyaan ibn Uyainah said, "*Zuhd* with respect to this world is where one, if he is blessed with something, gives thanks and, if he is tried, is patient."[3]

Al-Bugha and Mistu also point out that there developed in the Muslim world a non-Islamic form of *zuhd* that was borrowed from other cultures. This is where a person shows disdain for this world, forbids for himself what Allah has made lawful, voluntarily chooses a life of poverty and refuses to work or follow the means to sustenance that Allah has laid down for this world. This non-Islamic *zuhd* is an innovation in Islam and goes against the teachings of the Quran and sunnah.[4]

About the Narrator: Sahl ibn Saad al-Saa'idi

Sahl ibn Saad was from the Khazraj tribe of Madinah and was one of the Ansaar. Both he and his father were Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). His name was originally *Hazn*, implying sadness or grief. Therefore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) changed his name to Sahl, implying ease. He was only 15 years old when the Prophet (peace be upon him) died.

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[1] Quoted in al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 217.

[2] Quoted in al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 218.

[3] These quotes are also from al-Bugha and Mistu, pp. 218-219.

[4] Cf., al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 225. After mentioning that historical phenomenon, al-Bugha and Mistu then mention a new disease that is occurring in the Muslim world: the seeking after the goods of this world to the extent that one does not care if what he is doing is permissible or forbidden according to the Shariah.

Sahl died in the year 91 A.H. He was close to one hundred years of age. It is said that he was the last of the Companions to die in Madinah.

188 hadith are recorded on his authority.

Recorded by ibn Maajah

Ibn Maajah

Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Yazeed al-Rabee al-Qazweeni, known as ibn Maajah, was born in 209 A.H. He began studying hadith at an early age. He traveled to Khurasaan, Iraq, Hijaz, Greater Syria, Egypt and other places to pursue his study of hadith. He was known to be a trustworthy and good scholar of hadith.

It is said that he compiled a commentary on the Quran. However, the work he is best known for is what is known as *Sunan ibn Maajah*.[1] *Sunan ibn Maajah* became one of the "six standard collections" of hadith. There is no question, though, that it is considered the weakest of the six. Indeed, many scholars exclude ibn Maajah from the six and include in its place *Sunan al-Daarimi* or the *Muwatta* of Imam Malik, for example.

According to al-Azami, *Sunan ibn Maajah* contains some 4341 hadith. Out of these, 3002 hadith may be found in the other books of the "six books." Of the remaining 1339 hadith, 428 are said to be *sahih*, 199 are *hasan*, 613 have weak chains and 99 are outright rejected. Unfortunately, even when recording such weak or rejected hadith, ibn Maajah did not offer any comment after the hadith.

He died in the year 273 A.H. around the age of 64.[2]

Summary of the Hadith

- It was concluded that this hadith is weak. Therefore, there is no need to analyze it in detail.

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[1] This work is currently being translated into English: Muhammad Tufail Ansari, trans. *Sunan ibn-I-Majah* (Lahore: Kazi Publications, 1995).

[2] This information concerning ibn Maajah is derived from M. M. Azami, *Studies in Hadith Methodology and Literature* (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1977), pp. 105-107.

Hadith #32
"There is Not to Be Any Causing of Harm..."

عَنْ أَبي سَعِيْدٍ سَعْدِ بْنِ مَالِكِ بْنِ سِنَانٍ الخُدْرِيِّ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَسُوْلَ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ لاَ ضَرَرَ وَلاَ ضِرَارَ

حَدِيْثٌ حَسَنٌ رَوَاهُ ابْنُ مَاجَه وَالدَّارَقُطْنِيُّ وَغَيْرُهُمَا مُسْنَداً وَرَوَاهُ مَالِكٌ فِي المُوَطَّأ مُرْسَلاً عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ يَحْيَى عَنْ أَبِيْهِ عَنِ النَّبيِّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَأَسْقَطَ أَبَا سَعِيْدٍ وَلَهُ طُرُقٌ يُقَوِّي بَعْضُهَا بَعْضاً

On the authority of Abu Saeed Saad ibn Maalik ibn Sinaan al-Khudri, may Allah be pleased with him: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "There is not to be any causing of harm nor is there to be any reciprocating of harm."

This is a *hasan* hadith. It is recorded by ibn Maajah, al-Daaraqutni and others with a complete chain back to the Prophet (peace be upon him). Malik also recorded it in his *Muwatta* with a chain missing the name of the Companion, from Amr ibn Yahya from his father from the Prophet (peace be upon him). Abu Saeed is dropped from the chain. It has other chains that strengthen one another.

Selected Vocabulary

ضرر	- "harm," the opposite of what is beneficial
ضرار	- "causing of harm between two [individuals]," or "reciprocating of harm," as shall be discussed below
غيرهما	- "other than those two," the هما at the end makes it a dual reference.
مسند	- this is a technical term referring to the narrating of a hadith with a complete chain all the way back to the Prophet (peace be upon him).
مرسل	- this is also a technical term referring to the narrating of a hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) mentioning the Follower's name but without

mentioning the name of the Companion who narrated the hadith from the Prophet (peace be upon him).

أبيه - "his father"
طرق - literally, "paths," here it means other chains for the hadith
يقوي - "strengthen"
بعضها بعضا - "one another"

Takhreej

This hadith is *hasan*. This hadith has been recorded through a number of chains that support one another and raise it to the level of *hasan*.

It was recorded by al-Daaraqutni, al-Baihaqi and al-Haakim through a chain which contains Uthmaan ibn Muhammad ibn Uthmaan ibn Rabeeah, who was a weak narrator.

Ibn Abdul Barr also recorded this hadith with a separate chain in *al-Tamheed*. However, his chain contains an unknown narrator.

Malik, al-Shafi'ee in *al-Umm* and al-Baihaqi record this hadith with a chain that has trustworthy narrators. The only problem with the chain is that it is *mursal* or, in other words, the name of the Companion who originally passed on that hadith is missing.

The same hadith has been recorded from other Companions, such as ibn Abbaas, Aisha, Jaabir, Ubada ibn al-Saamit, Abu Huraira, Abu Lubaabah and Thalaba ibn Abu Maalik. In general, the chains from those Companions all have some problems with them, sometimes minor problems and sometimes major problems.

However, this hadith has enough chains with only minor problems to it to remove any concern that a mistake has been made in its transmission. Hence, it is raised to the level of *hasan lighairihi*.

This was the conclusion of al-Nawawi, as he stated here, and also of ibn Rajab,[1] al-Alai, al-Albaani,[2] al-Arnaoot and Baajis,[3] ibn Muhammad[4] and al-Hilaali.[5]

General Comments About the Hadith

This hadith mentions one of the most important principles in Islamic law. Its lesson or ruling virtually touches upon every aspect of fiqh. Abu Dawood stated that this is one of the hadith around which all of fiqh revolves, as was quoted earlier.

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[1] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 210.

[2] Al-Alaai and al-Albaani are quoted in ibn Muhammad, p. 191.

[3] Al-Arnaoot and Baajis in ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 207.

[4] Ibn Muhammad, p. 187.

[5] Al-Hilaali, *Eeqaadh*, p. 419.

About the Narrator: Abu Saeed al-Khudri

Abu Saeed al-Khudri was from the tribe of Khazraj in Madinah. On the Day of Uhud, he presented himself to the Prophet (peace be upon him) to join the army but the Prophet (peace be upon him) rejected him because of his youth. He was about thirteen years old at that time. His father took part in the fighting and became a martyr. After that battle, Abu Saeed took part in all the battles of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

He was one of the most knowledgeable of the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). He passed on that knowledge to the following generation and was one of the most important teachers of hadith among the Companions.

He died in the year 64 in Madinah. 1,170 hadith have been attributed to his authority. Al-Bukhari and Muslim both recorded forty-six of those hadith. Al-Bukhari recorded an additional sixteen hadith not found in *Sahih Muslim* while Muslim recorded another fifty-two hadith from Abu Saeed that al-Bukhari did not record.

"There is not to be any causing of harm nor is there to be any reciprocating of harm."

One could literally translate the Prophet's statement as, "[There is] no *dharar* and no *dharaar*." From the Arabic structure, the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated a fact. However, as al-Zarqaani points out, this statement of a fact is understood to mean prohibition. In other words, its meaning is, "There is not to be *dharar* or *dharaar*." This manner of speech, using a statement of a fact to imply a prohibition, is not uncommon in the Arabic language.[1]

Ahmad al-Zarqaa also points out that in this statement the Prophet (peace be upon him) has denied or ruled out the existence of any form or type of *dharar*. This manner of speech is stronger or further reaching than simply saying that something is prohibited or warning people about performing an act.[2] Furthermore, as al-Zarqaani pointed out, *dharar* and *dharaar* are in the indefinite forms. When something is both in the negative and in the indefinite, as is the case here, then the term is taken in its most general meaning, applying to all forms of *dharar* and *dharaar*. So, unless proven by other evidences of the Quran or sunnah, all forms of *dharar* or *dharaar* are absolutely prohibited.[3]

This brief statement of the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been understood in many different ways. Again, the hadith basically says, "No *dharar* and no *dharaar*." The meaning of *dharar* and the *dharaar* as well as the difference between them needs to be established first before the hadith can be commented upon in more detail.

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[1] al-Zarqaani, vol. 4, p. 40.

[2] Ahmad al-Zarqa, *Sharh al-Qawaaid al-Fiqhiya* (Daar al-Gharb al-Islaami, 1983), p. 113.

[3] Al-Zarqaani, vol. 4, p. 40. In addition, this is a case of negation through the use of the all-encompassing word, "*la*," literally meaning, "No." This also implies generality of the statement or, in other words, the fact that all forms of *dharar* and *dharaar* are prohibited.

One interpretation of the hadith is that the two words *dharar* and *dharaar* simply mean the same thing, "harming," and have been stated together as a type of emphasis. This was the view of ibn Habeeb.[1] After mentioning this opinion, al-Zarqa mentions a principle that has been alluded to more than once in this work: To understand a different phrase or word as giving new meaning to a sentence takes precedence over understanding it simply as giving emphasis.[2] Therefore, this interpretation must be considered a weak interpretation. Furthermore, the words are in two different forms and there is no proof to consider one as an emphasis of the other.

A second interpretation is that *dharar* means that no one is to be harmed, meaning that a person who is being harmed is not required to be patient and take that harm, while *dharaar* means that no one is to harm anyone else.

A third interpretation is the view of al-Khashaani. He stated that *dharar* is a case where a person gets some benefit from something while his neighbor is harmed by it. *Dharaar*, on the other hand, is reference to a case where the person himself enjoys no benefit from something while it is harmful to his neighbor.[3] According to al-Haitami, this particular view is completely baseless as there is no evidence to restrict the understanding in this manner.[4] Al-Baaji, on the other hand, understands this view to mean that *dharar* is in reference to an act by which someone benefits but which, unfortunately, harms others. On the other hand, *dharaar* is an act by which no one benefits and only harm is brought about upon others.[5]

Al-Baaji seems to favor a fourth interpretation. He says that *dharar* is in reference to one person harming, for example, his neighbor. On the other hand, *dharaar* is where each one of the two parties is harming the other, perhaps one in response to the harm from the other. This is much closer to the linguistic look of the word *dharaar*. It seems to be in the reciprocal form which implies that two parties are involved in the act.[6]

Yet another interpretation is given by ibn Abdul Barr. He says that *dharar* means to harm someone else. *Dharaar* refers to harming someone in response to some harm that was received from the other person but not in the manner that is correct or just according to the law. Hence, *dharaar* refers to responding to someone's harm in an improper way that goes beyond the limits of what is right and just.[1]

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[1] Quoted in Sulaimaan al-Baaji, *Al-Muntaqa Sharh Muwatta al-Imaam Maalik* (Beirut: Daar al-Kitaab al-Arabi, n.d.), vol. 6, p. 40.

[2] Al-Zarqa, p. 113.

[3] Quoted in al-Baaji, vol. 6, p. 40.

[4] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 237.

[5] Al-Baaji, vol. 6, p. 40. Al-Zarqaani (vol. 4, p. 40) and Ibn Abdul Barr (in al-Magharaawi, vol. 12, p. 12) reproduced the different interpretations originally presented by al-Baaji.

[6] This is known as the form *mufaailah*, where the act is being done by both parties. For example, the word *qitaal* means two parties or individuals fighting each other and not just one fighting the other.

It seems, Allah knows best, that, except for the first view that the two words simply mean the same thing, all of the other interpretations are plausible and, in reality, there is no contradiction between them. They all imply that all forms of harming others and all forms of wrongfully reciprocating harm are illegal and prohibited in Islam. In a previous hadith, it was stated that all forms of *dhulm* are forbidden. In reality, *dharar* is simply a subset of the acts of *dhulm.*[2]

However, the best or strongest interpretation seems to be that of ibn Abdul Barr. Hence, the translation here, "There is not to be any causing of harm nor is there to be any reciprocating of harm."

Ibn Rajab breaks down "harm" into two categories.[3] The first category is an act whose only result is the harming of others. The second category is where the act brings about some benefit to the person but harms another person. These two categories will be discussed in detail below.

Acts that Are Only Meant to Bring About Harm to Others

This type of act is an evil and is prohibited in Islam. Indeed, one cannot imagine a true believer doing such a deed to his brother in Islam. It strikes at the very root of the brotherhood and love that each Muslim should have for each other.

The Quran has specifically mentioned and forbidden actions of this nature. For example, Allah says about retaining one's wife after the pronouncement of divorce,

فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ سَرِّحُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ ۚ وَلَا تُمْسِكُوهُنَّ ضِرَارًا

لِّتَعْتَدُوا ۚ وَمَن يَفْعَلْ ذَٰلِكَ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ ۚ

"Either take them back on a reasonable basis or let them free on a reasonable basis. But do not take them back just to hurt them. And whoever does that has wronged his soul" (*al-Baqara* 231). Allah also says about retaining one's divorced wife,

وَبُعُولَتُهُنَّ أَحَقُّ بِرَدِّهِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ إِنْ أَرَادُوا إِصْلَاحًا ۚ

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[1] Al-Magharaawi, vol. 12, p. 12. Al-Bugha and Mistu (p. 227) conclude that this is the strongest interpretation.

[2] Some have recently translated this hadith as, "There is not to be any causing of harm to oneself or causing of harm to others." This author could not find any support for this translation/interpretation of this hadith. None of the early scholars explained this hadith in this manner.

[3] Cf., ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, pp. 212ff; al-Bugha and Mistu, pp. 230ff.

"And their husbands have the better right to take them back in that period, if they wish reconciliation" (*al-Baqara* 228).

These verses prove that if a man returns to his divorced wife during her waiting period and he does that simply with the intention of causing her harm, by not letting her out of the marriage or not letting her free to marry someone other than him, then he is committing a sin. In pre-Islamic times, there was no limit to the number of times that one could make a pronouncement of divorce for his wife. Hence, a person could divorce his wife and then retain her just before the end of the waiting period and continue to do that for as long as he was alive. Islam put an end to such harm and oppression by limiting the right to divorce to three pronouncements. After the third pronouncement, the man cannot return to his wife during the waiting period.

In fact, according to Imam Malik, if a man divorces his wife and then, just before her waiting period is over, makes a verbal pronouncement of returning to her but then again announces a new divorce without having had intercourse with her in the meanwhile, her waiting period does not begin anew if it is determined that he did that simply to harm her. If he did not do that simply to harm her, her waiting period begins anew. According to Ataa, Qataada, al-Shafi'ee's old opinion and one narration from Ahmad, in all such cases, her waiting period does not begin anew but continues from when he took her back as his wife. According to the majority of the scholars, though, her waiting period will always begin anew in such cases.[1]

A second example is that of a man not having sexual intercourse with his wife. One case is that of *al-eelaa* (الإيلاء). This is where a man makes an oath that he will not approach his wife. The Quran has set a limit of four months for such an oath. After the four months, his repentance is to have intercourse with her. If he does not approach her at that time, then, according to some, she is divorced because of the passing of that time. According to others, he must have intercourse with her and if he does not, he is ordered to divorce her.

The scholars also discuss the case of a man who does not have intercourse with his wife for four months, without previously making an oath, but with the intention of harming his wife. Some Hanbali scholars say that he has the same ruling as the one who made an oath, as discussed in the previous paragraph. Other Hanbalis say that if a man does not have intercourse with his wife for a period of four months and then she requests a separation, that separation is to be given to her because the act of sexual intercourse is obligatory upon him during that period. Ibn Rajab points out that these scholars differ as to whether the separation is only to be granted if the husband intended by that the harming of his wife.

Malik and his companions say that if a husband avoids intercourse with his wife for no valid excuse, then their marriage can be dissolved. However, they differ as to the length of the period of time. Some say six months while others say two years.[1]

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[1] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 214.

The important point is that all of these rulings and similar ones are based on the principle mentioned in this hadith. There is nothing beneficial in the deeds described above. They just bring about harm and no benefit. It is not permissible for anyone to harm anyone else. If such harm is present, it must be put to an end. That is the basis for the above rulings and many other rulings in the Islamic fiqh.

Acts that are Beneficial to One and Harmful to Another

A much more problematic area is where a person performs an act that is permissible and beneficial for him but that, unfortunately, has negative consequences for others. An example is when a person uses his property in a way that is permissible but while doing so he has damaged his neighbor's property. How are cases like this to be handled in the light of this hadith?

If a person performs an act that is customarily considered improper because it is known to lead to harmful results, he would be held responsible for that act and should be prevented from it. The example that the scholars give is a person starting a bonfire on his property on a very windy day. If the fire spreads to his neighbor, he is to be held responsible for the damage that he caused. There is agreement among the scholars on that point.[2]

If the act is a normally acceptable and proper act, what then should be the ruling? Suppose, for example, a person adds a second floor to his house and now has windows overlooking his neighbor's property by which he can see the womenfolk who live next door. Is he allowed to do such a thing which obviously brings about harm to his neighbor? There is a difference of opinion among the scholars concerning the extent to which this hadith, "There is not to be any causing of harm nor is there to be any reciprocating of harm," is to be applied when it comes to one's sole personal belongings, shared or co-joining properties and the public interest. Why this question is difficult to answer is because it involves to conflicting harmful results: The owner of his property will be harmed if he is not allowed to use his property in a manner that benefits or pleases him; and the other party will be harmed if the owner is allowed to use his property in the manner he so desires.

The different schools of fiqh have taken different approaches to this question, going from one extreme in applying this hadith with respect to personal property to the opposite extreme. Each school shall be discussed separately.[3]

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[1] Cf., ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 214.

[2] Cf., Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 217.

[3] The following discussion is mostly based on Ahmad Muwaafi, *Al-Dharar fi al-Fiqh al-Islaami* (Al-Khobar, Saudi Arabia: Daar ibn Affaan, 1997), vol. 1, pp. 251-327. Also see Abdullah al-Muslih, *Quyood al-Milkiyyah al-Khaasah* (Riyadh: Daar al-Muayyad, 1995), pp. 509-554.

The Hanafi Approach: The Hanafis are explicit that the wording of this hadith, "There is not to be any causing of harm nor is there to be any reciprocating of harm," is general but its meaning is specific or particularized.[1] They say that *hudood* and *tazeer* punishments are obviously exempted from the meaning of this hadith although they obviously cause harm to those being punished. They extend that exemption from this ruling to the case of a person who has a tree on his property that provides shade to his neighbor. They say that it is permissible for the owner of the tree to cut down that tree and to do with his property what he wills, even if it may cause some slight harm to his neighbor. They argue that this hadith, "There is not to be any causing of harm nor is there to be any reciprocating of harm," applies only to great or destructive harm, such as a person doing something with his property that will destroy another person's property, completely block off a basic need to another person or make another person's property unusable. In other words, the Hanafis give preference to a person's general right to use his own personal property over the general meaning of this hadith. This seems to be the clear opinion of Abu Hanifah, Abu Yoosuf and Muhammad al-Shaibaani.[2]

The second question of importance here is one piece of property that has shared ownership. For example, if two people own two apartments in the same apartment building, one on the upper floor and the other on the bottom floor, does the one on the top floor have the right to do something that is harmful to the one on the bottom floor? In this case, the Hanafis take a slightly different approach. They do not allow either person to do anything that would harm the other, even if the harm is only slight.

If a person is going to do something that is going to cause a general or public harm, then the Hanafis state that this hadith, "There is not to be any causing of harm nor is there to be any reciprocating of harm," is to be applied in its most general sense. No one is allowed to cause such public harm even if that harm is not of a great nature.

Hence, it can be seen that the Hanafis' prohibition of harm becomes stricter as one moves from one's private personal belongings to property that is co-owned or co-joined to matters affecting the public interest. A person has the right to use his exclusive and sole personal belongings in any permissible way he sees fit, even if it causes slight harm to others. However, if others have a vested interest in that property or if the common interest is involved, he is not allowed to create any harm, even if that harm is slight. It should also be noted that the Hanafis do state that it is morally wrong to cause any kind of harm to others in all cases, although legally the law cannot object in the first case of slight harm while using one's exclusive property.

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[1] This is an acceptable form of speech wherein one says something in a general fashion while the actual intent is to refer to only a subset of the general class.

[2] Muwaafi, vol. 1, p. 261, notes that some of the later Hanafi scholars were somewhat more liberal in their application of this hadith and placed more restrictions on a person's use of his private property.

The Maliki Approach: The Malikis accept the hadith, "There is not to be any causing of harm nor is there to be any reciprocating of harm," and adhere to it in its most general meaning. Based on it, they forbid any form of harm, even if it involves a person's use of is own private property. In other words, they give preference to the implication of this hadith over the general right of the person to use his property in any permissible manner he wills. Therefore, for example, they say that a person is not allowed to dig a well on his property if that causes harm to his neighbor's already existing well. Studying the *fatwa*s or rulings of Imam Malik himself, such was definitely his approach to this issue.

The esteemed Maliki legal theorist al-Shaatibi discussed this issue and divided the possible cases into eight cases: (1) the case where the act does not necessarily cause harm to another; (2) what necessarily causes harm to another and the person intends to harm the other; (3) what necessarily causes a general harm but the person does not intend that harm; (4) what necessarily causes harm to another but the person does not intend the harm and is in need of performing the act; (5) similarly to (4) but the person is not in need of the act and it only causes harm; (6) what rarely causes harm; (7) what causes harm in the majority of the cases; and (8) what causes harm often but not in the majority of the cases.

In the first case, the person is definitely allowed to perform the act. In the second case, he is sinful due to his intention and if there is no other way for him to achieve his beneficial goal, he is still allowed to go forth with the act. In the third case, the general interest takes precedence over his individual need. The fourth case is the most debatable. Al-Shaatibi concludes that the person fulfilling his need will take precedence over harming the other. In the fifth case, the person will not be allowed to perform the deed as it will not bring about any real benefit. In the sixth case, the person is permitted to do the act because what rarely occurs is not taken into consideration by the *shareeah*. In the seventh case, the person will be prevented from performing the act due to the expected harm from it. The eighth case is debatable because of the possibility of harm but al-Shaatibi includes that an act is considered permissible until demonstrated that it should be otherwise. Hence, in that case, the person can go ahead with the act.[1]

The Shafi'ee Approach: Muwaafi begins his discussion of the Shafi'ee approach by saying that it seems that their basic approach is that the hadith, "There is not to be any causing of harm nor is there to be any reciprocating of harm," does not apply at all to the use of one's personal property in ways that are otherwise permitted by law. In fact, it seems that even if the person uses his property in ways that harm himself, he is allowed to do so. One can see in the Shafi'ee books of fiqh that if a person digs a well that leads to his neighbors' collapsing, the builder of the well will not be held liable for the damage.

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[1] For more details, the interested reader may consult Ibraaheem al-Shaatibi, *al-Muwaafaqaat* (Al-Khobar, Saudi Arabia: Daar ibn Affaan, 1997), vol. 3, pp. 53-85.

The principle and conditions that they apply are only the following: A person may use his personal wealth and property in any way he wills as long as it is something customary and acceptable and as long as he was not extravagant and going beyond the norm in what he did. If he meets these two conditions, he will not be liable for any form of damage that his act caused. Hence, it can be seen that the Shafi'ees place a great emphasis on the individuals right to use his property and wealth as he sees fit, even if it may cause harm to others.

It seems, though, that the two conditions they laid down are the extent to which harm may be allowed. In other words, it seems that their reasoning was that what is normally done and accepted must be something that does not cause a great deal of harm to others. Otherwise, such an act would not be normal and accepted. Therefore, one can find in their books of fiqh that if a person digs a well on his property and that well is greater in size than what is normally accepted and it then leads to his neighbor's wall collapsing, he will be held accountable for the harm that he caused in such a case.

Hence, the Shafi'ees define harm when it comes to personal property as that harm which is cause by doing something out of the norm. If a person does something of that nature, then the hadith, "There is not to be any causing of harm nor is there to be any reciprocating of harm," applies to his case and he will be held responsible for the harm he caused.

With respect to property that is co-owned or co-joined, they, like the Hanafis, are very restrictive and apply the hadith, "There is not to be any causing of harm nor is there to be any reciprocating of harm," to all forms of harm. One must get permission from the others involved before doing anything that could possibly harm them.

The Hanbali Approach: The Hanbalis are the most liberal in applying the hadith, "There is not to be any causing of harm nor is there to be any reciprocating of harm," to virtually every form of harm, even if this application interferes with a person's right to use his personal property in the way he wills. After mentioning this hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him), Ahmad once said, "A person is to be prevented from performing any such act that brings about harm. If he responds [positively, fine]. If he does not, then the ruler is to compel him [to desist]."[1]

Ahmad says, for example, that the person must cover any opening that looks upon his neighbor's house. It is also prohibited for a person to add on to his house and prevent his neighbors from receiving the sunlight or moonlight that they used to receive.[1]

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[1] Quoted in ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 218.

Ibn Taimiya, a Hanbali for the most part, takes a slightly more moderate approach. Muwaafi makes the following conclusion from what ibn Taimiya wrote:

(1) Causing harm is forbidden by the Quran and sunnah.

(2) If a person is going to do an otherwise permissible act with his property but his sole intention is to harm someone else, then it is not allowed for him to do that act. Furthermore, if he is going to do something that he does not need to do or will not get any overriding benefit from but its only result will be harming others, he, again, is not allowed to do that act.

(3) A person may do what he wills with his property when it does not bring about any harm to others.

(4) If a person is in need of doing something with this property and the act will result in an overriding benefit, without any intent to cause harm to others, than that act is allowed and the resulting harm, if any, is to be excused.

Ahmad was also of the view that if a person was going to do an act that was not going to harm his neighbor, then the neighbor has no right to object to his act since no harm is going to come to him. For the neighbor to try to stop the person in this case is actually a kind of causing of harm by the neighbor since he is preventing the other person from doing with his wealth what will be pleasing to him.

This is the manner in which the Hanbalis attempt to balance the implication of the hadith, "There is not to be any causing of harm nor is there to be any reciprocating of harm," with the general principle that a person has the right to dispose of his property in any permissible fashion he wills.

Muwaafi's Conclusions: After reviewing the four schools of fiqh[2] Muwaafi came to the following conclusions:

All of the four schools of fiqh accept this hadith and its implication as a general principle (*qaaidah fiqhiyah*) that applies to co-owned or co-joined property or wealth as well as matters related to the public interest. They differ as to whether this hadith restricts an individual's right to use his sole property in the way he wishes. The Hanbalis definitely say it does. The Malikis are close to their view. The Hanafis do not apply to such property, unless it creates a clear and great harm. The Shafi'ees are on the furthest other end and do not apply it in general to a person's use of his solely owned property. However, the Shafi'ees and Hanafis do not completely disregard this hadith with respect to one's solely owned property, as was shown in the previous discussion. In other words, the Shafi'ees and Hanafis give more preference to individual property rights while the Hanbalis give more preference to the literal meaning of this particular hadith. If one looks at the *shareeah* evidences as a whole, Muwaafi concludes that the Hanbalis have the stronger argument as the *shareeah* as a whole is always trying to bring about benefit and prevent harm.

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[1] Cf., ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 217.

[2] Muwaafi also reviewed the views of the Dhaahiris and Shiah.

Abu Zahra's Approach: Muhammad Abu Zahra has approached this question from a slightly different angle, having been influenced by al-Shaatibi's discussion in *al-Muwaafaqaat*. He divides the cases of possible harm to others through the use of one's own property into the following cases:

(1) A case where harm is almost certain to occur: If, in this case, the person is able to use his property or meet his goal in such a way that it does not harm another party, then he is not allowed to do the harmful act and must instead do the non-harmful act. If such is not possible and the resulting harm will be a general or public harm, then the general interest takes precedence and the person is prevented from doing the act. If the act will harm only another individual, for example, then the right of the person to use his personal property in a beneficial manner takes precedence over the right of the person who is going to be harmed.

(2) A case where harm is probable to occur: In this case, the ruling is exactly the same as in the cases described under (1). This is because in Islamic law the ruling for what is probable to occur is, in general, the exact ruling as for that which is certain to occur. This is a legal maxim that most jurists adhere to. If the amount of expected benefit is greater than or equal to the amount of probable harm, the person is free to use his personal property in the manner he so wills.

(3) A case where harm occurs often but is not necessary probable or in the majority of the cases: The Shafi'ee and Hanafi approach is that the basic ruling is that of permissibility unless it can be shown that the act will bring about some harm. Hence, in this case, there is no strong proof that harm will be the result, so the owner of the property is free to act as he wills. On this point, Abu Zahra inexplicably does a complete about face and says that the safest view is that the person is not allowed to use his property in the way that may harm others in such a case. Then he quotes this hadith for the first time, "There is not to be any causing of harm nor is there to be any reciprocating of harm." He says that the approach of the *shareeah* is that permissible things are sometimes made forbidden as a precautionary act against some harm that may possibly come about.

(4) The case where the probability of harm is negligible: In this case, the established principle of a person being allowed to use his personal property according to his will takes precedence over the small chance that harm may come about.[1]

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[1] Cf., Muhammad Abu Zahra, *Al-Takaaful al-Ijtimaa'ee fi-l-Islaam* (Daar al-Fikr al-Arabi), n.d., pp. 64-66.

The Author's Conclusions: Virtually any act that a person does with his personal private property can be seen as an infringement or harm upon others. Even the simple act of driving onto a highway is actually harmful to others as it causes the highway to be more congested, causes drivers to drive slower and causes more accidents. Hence, it is clear that this hadith does not imply the prohibition of any type of "harm," especially if harm is thought of in a wide context.

Like the rulings of the *shareeah* with respect to the laws of necessity, there are some forms of hardship or harm that must be considered customarily and within the means of humans to bear. Those types of harm are not given any special rulings in the *shareeah* and it is expected that humans must bear them.

The *shareeah* did not give a strict definition of "harm". Hence, it must be something that is left up to the cultural environment and may change over time. In other words, what may be considered harm at one time or place may no longer be considered harm as another time or place.

Taking these facts into consideration, it seems that the strongest interpretation or implementation of this hadith is something close to the Shafi'ee approach. If there is an act that causes a normally accepted and expected harm and the person performs that act in the normal manner, then he is not to be prevented from doing that act, even if it may cause some slight harm to others. However, if he performs that act in an improper fashion or if that act is originally considered one that causes an unacceptable level of harm, then he is not allowed to perform that act. If, in that case, he goes ahead and does the act, he will be liable for any damage or harm that he causes to others. Also, if the act causes a general harm, then the interest of the general public takes precedence over the interest of the individual. Finally, if the act rarely or usually does not lead to any expected harm, he should be free to perform the act.

This seems to be the best way to balance the following considerations that must be taken into account:

(a) Islam respects personal property and the freedom to use one's property in any permissible manner.

(b) Islamic law has as one of its main goals the bringing about of utility and the prevention of harm.

(c) In the optimal case, neither the owner of the property should be harmed by being restricted in his actions nor should anyone else be harmed.

(d) The rights of society as a whole or the general public, in general, take precedence over individual rights.

(e) There are some levels of harm and hardship that Islamic Law recognizes will exist and that the people must ordinarily bear.

(f) Things that rarely or seldom occur are overlooked by the *shareeah.*

Therefore, the meaning of this hadith is, "There is not to be any causing of harm"— except that which is commonplace, normal and acceptable to all, as such is, in reality, unavoidable— "nor is there to be any reciprocating of harm"— except what is the result of the due process of the law.

It must be clearly understood that no Muslim should ever intentionally cause harm to another Muslim. If he does so, even if his act is considered legal in this world, he may be held sinful and accountable for that act on the Day of Judgment.

Finally, if a person is willing to sacrifice his right to use his property in a beneficial manner for himself because he fears that it may cause harm to others, then he has done a good deed by giving preference to his brother and, Allah willing, Allah will be pleased with that act and will reward him handsomely on the Day of Judgment.

Allah Does not Command Anything Harmful

One of the conclusions that one can reach from this hadith and other hadith or verses of the Quran is that Allah has not ordered anything harmful in the religion of Islam. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated that there should be no harming or reciprocating of harm and, therefore, this means that the obligations or prohibitions of the religion itself must, by definition, not be considered harmful. Indeed, the opposite conclusion can then be made: Everything that the religion commands is beneficial for human beings. It is what is best for them in both this life and the Hereafter. Everything that the religion forbids is harmful for human beings both in this life and the Hereafter.

This religion comes from Allah, the Creator of mankind. Allah knows best the abilities and limitations of mankind. The laws of Islam take into consideration those aspects. That is why, for example, special laws are given for those who are ill, traveling and so forth. This is all in accord with what Allah has stated in the Quran,

وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِى ٱلدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ ۚ

"[He] has not laid upon you any hardship in the religion" (*al-Hajj* 78).

The Concept of a Fiqh Maxim (*Qaaidah Fiqhiya*)

The principle that is mentioned in this hadith is a principle that spans the entire gamut of fiqh topics. These words of the Prophet (peace be upon him) have developed into a fiqh maxim and from it other important fiqh maxims have been derived. A fiqh maxim is a general fiqh principle that governs almost all[1] of the cases under its scope regardless of the area of fiqh.[2]

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[1] There could be exceptions to the general rule. These exceptions would be based on other available evidence, such as a Quranic verse or hadith making an exception for a particular action that seems to be violating the generally accepted principle.

[2] A fiqh maxim (*qaaidah fiqhiya*) differs from a *dhaabit fiqhi* or "fiqh rule" in that a *dhaabit* only applies to one area of fiqh. For example, the principle that "everything that the earth produces

The idea of a legal or fiqh maxim comes from the fact that most *shareeah* rulings have some *'illah* (cause or reason) that drives or lies behind those particular rulings.[1] These causes or reasons are not necessarily different for each individual fiqh question. On the contrary, as one studies fiqh, one will readily notice that many fiqh issues are driven or ruled by the same cause or reason that leads to a particular ruling or conclusion. When a jurist considers a new ruling for a new case, he takes into consideration those causes or reasons that have been demonstrated in other *shareeah* cases. After studying a number of cases, the jurist may be able to determine a principle that applies in all of these cases.[2] This principle is what is known as a fiqh maxim or *qaaidah fiqhiya*.

These fiqh maxims are of extreme importance to the jurist. They give him an understanding of what the *shareeah* intends and how it achieves its goals. In fact, ibn Nujaim wrote about the fiqh maxims, "They are the real foundations for fiqh. It is by these that a jurist is elevated to the level of *ijtihaad* (independent legal reasoning)."[3] The importance of the fiqh maxims may also be noted in what al-Suyooti wrote (quoting those who preceded him). He stated that all of the Shafi'ee school's fiqh rulings can be traced to five fiqh maxims:

(1) What is known for certain is not removed by conjecture.
(2) Hardship begets facility.
(3) Harm is to be removed or ended.
(4) What is practiced by custom becomes equivalent to law.
(5) Matters are based on the intention behind them.[4]

This does not mean that a jurist would necessarily make a ruling solely based on a fiqh maxim. First, he would have to see if there are any Quranic or hadith texts related to the question at hand. If so, then the text takes precedence over any general principle. With respect to this hadith, for example, a person could argue that cutting off the hand of the thief is a kind of *dharar* or harm for

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that is watered by natural rainwater has a one-tenth tax on it" is not a fiqh maxim because it is only relevant to one topic of fiqh. Similarly, the principle that "all water is considered pure as long as its nature, smell or color has not changed" is also not a fiqh maxim because it only deals with the topic of purity.

[1] Some scholars, in particular the Dhahiris, would object to that statement. However, that is the majority and strongest view. A detailed discussion of that point, though, is beyond the scope of this work.

[2] The fiqh maxims, as is the case here, may also be directly derived from a verse in the Quran or a hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

[3] Ibn Nujaim's statement is from the commentary on his work, *al-Ashbaahu wa al-Nadhair*: Ahmad al-Hamawi, *Ghamz Uyoon al-Basaair Sharh Kitaab al-Ashbaahu wa al-Nadhaair* (Beirut: Daar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1985), vol. 1, p. 34.

[4] Jalaal al-Din al-Suyooti, *Al-Ashbaahu wa al-Nadhaair fi Qawaid wa Furoo Fiqh al-Shafiiyah* (Daar Ihyaa al-Kutub al-Arabi), p. 8. He quotes al-Subki as saying that it is only through difficult or far-fetched explanations that one can trace all of the fiqh back to at least one of these fiqh maxims. Al-Subki's comment is definitely true but it does not negate the fact that the meaning and implication of these five fiqh maxims reverberates through a great deal of fiqh rulings.

the thief and, therefore, it should not be allowed based on this hadith. However, such has been sanctioned by the *shareeah.* This proves that cutting off the hand of the thief is either in reality not a *dharar* or it is a kind of *dharar* that is exempted from the general rule. Second, the jurist would try to determine previous rulings on the particular issue. Previous scholars may have derived something directly from the Quran and sunnah and not relied upon the general principle. If a new case arrives and the scholar can find no texts or previous rulings related to the question, then he may resort to the fiqh maxim to make his conclusion.[1]

The Fiqh Maxims Related to This Hadith

A number of fiqh maxims are directly related to or derived from this one brief, comprehensive statement of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). These include the following:

(1) "There is to be no harm nor reciprocating of harm." As mentioned earlier, the words of this hadith in themselves make a fiqh maxim that is accepted and applied by all four schools of fiqh.

According to al-Suyooti, numerous fiqh rulings are directly related to this fiqh principle. Of the many examples he mentioned, he included the principle of preventing a person who is not spending his wealth properly from being able to dispense with his wealth. He says that even the fighting against the polytheists and renegades falls under this principle.[2]

Particular examples of the application of this fiqh maxim would include the following: If a person rents farm land from another person and his lease ends just prior to harvesting season, perhaps due to a late harvest, then he is allowed to continue his lease at its old rate until the harvest comes in. This is to prevent him from being harmed as he was the one who sowed and worked the field and he is deserving of its harvest.

A second example would be: If a person agrees to buy something perishable from a seller and, before the exchange of money and goods, the seller cannot be found, then the buyer has the right to negate that contract and purchase those perishable goods from somebody else if he fears that they would spoil during the time it would take him to find the seller. This ruling, obviously, is based on the goal of preventing harm to the buyer.[3]

A third example is: It is permissible to imprison a person of means who refuses to support his children or other relatives that must rely upon him. It is considered permissible to beat such a person if he continues in his refusal to support those who rely upon him. This is obviously meant to repel the harm that would come to those who cannot support themselves and who are not being supported by one who is financially capable and responsible.[1]

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[1] Cf., Ali Ahmad al-Nadwi, *Al-Qawaaid al-Fiqhiya* (Damascus: Daar al-Qalam, 1986), p. 295.

[2] Al-Syuti, *al-Ashbaah*, p. 93.

[3] Cf., Muhammad Sidqi al-Boornu, *Al-Wajeez fi Eedhaah Qawaaid al-Fiqh al-Kuliyyah* (Riyadh: al-Maktabah al-Maarif, 1990), pp. 196-197.

The scholars have understood from this principle that harm must be repelled and prevented from existence to the maximum amount reasonable. They have also understood that both harm of a general nature as well as of a specific nature are to be prevented. In addition, if harm exists, it is to be removed as well as prevented from repeating itself.[2] Therefore, they have derived the following fiqh maxims that are directly related to their understanding of this particular hadith.

(2) "Harm is to be prevented from appearing as much as possible." If the harm has not yet appeared, it is to be prevented from appearing. If the harm has already appeared, it is to be removed as much as possible. Prevention is better than cure, as some scholars have stated. To keep a harm from even beginning is considered a goal in itself, based on this hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Besides the implicit understanding of this particular hadith, there are other evidences for this fiqh maxim. One of them is the verse in the Quran,

وَأَعِدُّوا۟ لَهُم مَّا ٱسْتَطَعْتُم مِّن قُوَّةٍ وَمِن رِّبَاطِ ٱلْخَيْلِ تُرْهِبُونَ بِهِۦ
عَدُوَّ ٱللَّهِ وَعَدُوَّكُمْ وَءَاخَرِينَ مِن دُونِهِمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَهُمُ ٱللَّهُ يَعْلَمُهُمْ ۚ وَمَا
تُنفِقُوا۟ مِن شَىْءٍ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ يُوَفَّ إِلَيْكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ لَا تُظْلَمُونَ

"And prepare for them all you can of power, including steeds of war, to threaten the enemy of Allah and your enemy, and others besides whom you may not know but whom Allah does know" (*al-Anfaal* 60). The purpose of this preparation is to put fear in the hearts of those who may think about attacking or harming the Muslims. This preparation in itself is sometimes sufficient to prevent that harm and evil.[3]

(3) "Harm is to be removed or put an end to." Whenever harm exists, efforts must be made to bring it to an end. For example, if a person builds something on or near a public roadway that causes harm to the people, then what he built must be removed.[4] Also based on this principle is that a person is responsible for what he damages of other people's property or belongings.

(4) "Harm is not to be removed by a similar harm." Harm is to be repelled and ended. However, it should not be repelled by bringing about a greater or equivalent harm. If that is the only alternative, then the harm is to be removed only to the extent that its removal does not bring about another greater

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[1] This example was taken from A. al-Zarqa, p. 115. Al-Zarqa, pp. 114-121, has given numerous examples of the application of this principle.

[2] Cf., al-Boornu, p. 195.

[3] Cf., al-Boornu, p. 198.

[4] Al-Boornu, p. 201.

or equivalent harm. Based on this principle, for example, a starving person is not allowed to take the food of another person who is also on the verge of starvation. Removing the one person's starvation by causing the other person's starvation is simply removing one harm by another and is not permissible.[1]

(5) "A greater harm can be removed by a lesser harm." Sometimes the only way to remove a harm is by causing another harm. However, if that second harm is a lesser harm, then it may be brought about to remove the greater harm. Based on this principle, it is considered permissible for a just Muslim ruler to take wealth from rich Muslims if the money from zakat is not sufficient to meet the needs of the poor Muslims.[2] The lesser harm in this case is the taking of rich people's lawful and rightful money. However, the greater harm is the starvation or detriment that comes to the poor by not being able to fulfill their needs properly. Hence, the latter takes precedence.

This maxim has two close corollaries:

(5a) "If one has no other options, he should take the lesser of two evils." Based on this principle, it is allowed to open the belly of a deceased pregnant woman if it is felt that the fetus will survive.[3]

(5b) "If there is a conflict between two evils, precedence is given to avoiding the evil of greater harm."

(6) "The presence of a particular harm is accepted to ward off a general harm." This is based on the same idea that a lesser harm is to be accepted to ward off a greater harm. If an individual or a small minority of the people are adversely affected by something that is needed to prevent harm to all, then society's needs take precedence to their individual needs. An example related to this principle is that the government can force the monopolies or those who have hoarded goods to sell their goods at normal market prices even though the sellers themselves are harmed by that in that they cannot achieve their maximum potential profit.

(7) "Preventing evil takes precedence over bringing about some benefit." If an act, for example, brings about an equivalent or similar amount of harm and benefit, then preventing its harm will take precedence over producing its benefit. This principle can also be proven by the Quranic verse,

وَلَا تَسُبُّوا۟ ٱلَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ فَيَسُبُّوا۟ ٱللَّهَ عَدْوًۢا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍۗ

"And insult not those whom they [the disbelievers] worship besides Allah, lest they insult Allah wrongfully without knowledge" (*al-Anaam* 108).

The example of this principle that al-Bugha and Mistu give is that of selling drugs and intoxicants. There can be a great deal of economic benefit in such transactions. However, because of the equivalent amount of harm they bring about, they are prohibited.[1]

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[1] Al-Boornu, p. 202.
[2] Al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 240.
[3] Al-Boornu, p. 204.

(8) "If there is a conflict between factors calling for something and factors prohibiting something, the prohibition takes precedence." This is directly related to the hadith under discussion here. If something is prohibited, it must be the case that there is some harm to it. Therefore, if all other things are equal, the judgment of prohibition will take precedent over permission.

(9) "Something harmful is not given precedence just because it was pre-existing." In general, pre-existing matters take precedence. But simply because something was pre-existing does not make it an excuse to cause harm. For example, if someone was living in a house and near him was vacant land and then a house was built upon that vacant land, if he now has a window that looks directly into the private areas of that new house, according to some scholars, most notably the Hanbalis, the window must be removed. In a case of this nature, just because the window was pre-existing does not allow it to continue to exist and be a cause of harm.[2]

"Malik also recorded it..."

Imam Malik

Malik ibn Anas ibn Malik ibn Abu Amr al-Asbaahi was born around the year 93 A.H. He was the great grandson of a Companion of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Malik is considered the "founder" of one of the four well-known schools of fiqh. In addition to being a great jurist, he was also a great scholar of hadith.

Imam Malik is known for not traveling in search of knowledge and hadith. This goes against the custom of the scholars of his time. However, Malik had an ample opportunity to meet with many scholars as they would come to visit the city of Madinah. Furthermore, many of the leading scholars of his time lived in Madinah. Some of his most important teachers included Naafi, the freed slave of ibn Umar, the great scholar of hadith al-Zuhri and the great jurist Rabeeah al-Rai.

In his legal reasoning, Imam Malik laid great emphasis on the practices of the people of Madinah. He argued that these had been passed on since the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and, in some aspects, were equivalent to the passing on of the hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

A number of works have been attributed to him. Most of them are not in existence now and not much is known about them. However, one work that has been passed on throughout the centuries is his compilation of hadith and statements of earlier scholars, known as *al-Muwatta.*[1] It is not a "pure hadith" work in the sense that it also contains a large number of reports from other personalities and not just from the Prophet (peace be upon him). But its importance and quality as a collection of hadith should not be underestimated.

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[1] Al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 240.

[2] Al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 241.

Malik's students include Imam al-Shafi'ee and Muhammad ibn Hasan al-Shaibaani, the close companion of Abu Hanifah. Both al-Shafi'ee and al-Shaibaani learned the *Muwatta* directly from Malik.

Malik died in the year 179 A.H. in Madinah.[2]

Other Points Derived from This Hadith

- The implementation of the legal penalties for crimes such as adultery, theft, murder and so forth does not fall under this prohibition of *dharar*. Although obvious harm comes to the one whose hand is cut off, for example, such harm is sanctioned by the *shareeah*. It is sanctioned because it is a way of repelling evil and repelling evil takes precedence over bringing about benefits. Furthermore, in reality, such laws have been enacted in order to prevent *dharar* or harm from occurring.[3]
- Harming someone else in response to the harm that another has done is never to be a goal in itself. Justice and equity is a goal but not simply the harming of another. Therefore, for example, if A destroys B's property, then B does not have the right to go and destroy A's property. There is no benefit in that. There is only harm and waste of wealth in such an action. In that kind of case, then, A is required to pay B for his losses. The ruling, though, is different in the case of bodily retribution or the law of retaliation. This is because, in general, no price can be put on such losses and one has the right to enact the same act upon the guilty party.[4]
- The Islamic society should be such that no member tries to wrong or harm any other member of the society. If a person intentionally does so, he is committing a sin and he is harming the intended goal of Muslim brotherhood. For this reason, laws have been put into effect to either eradicate or deter such behavior of any individual. This overall goal for society, therefore, takes precedence over individual rights, as opposed to modern-day Western societies which have overturned that understanding.
- Since wrongdoing and harm are to be completely avoided, this automatically implies that their opposites are to be acted upon. In other

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[1] At least two complete translations of *al-Muwatta* are currently available in English: Muhammad Rahimuddin, *Muwatta Imam Malik* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1980); Aisha Abdarahman al-Tarjumana and Yaqub Johnson, trans., *Al-Muwatta: Imam Malik* (Norwich, England: Diwan Press, 1982).

[2] The above information concerning Malik was derived from Abdul Ghani al-Diqr, *al-Imaam Maalik ibn Anas: Imaam Daar al-Hijrah* (Damascus: Daar al-Qalam, 1990), *passim.*

[3] Cf., A. al-Zarqa, p. 113.

[4] Cf., Mustafa al-Zarqa, *al-Madkhal al-Fiqhi al-Aam* (Beirut: Daar al-Fikr, 1968), vol. 2, p. 978.

words, causing harm is not an option for a true believer. The option then open to him is to bring about benefit or, at the very least, perform a neutral act. Hence, a believer's every deed should either be positively beneficial or, at the very least, not causing any harm to anyone.

- If someone is harming someone else, such as physically attacking him, the person has the right to defend himself and repel that harm, even if he harms the perpetrator in the process. Such does not violate the principle of this hadith. But a person does not have the right to "take the law into his own hands." If someone has already harmed another person, then he must go through the proper legal means to rectify or remove that harm that has been done.[1] The harmed person has two choices: either forgive the perpetrator or take his matter to the proper authorities.[2] Al-Nawawi gives two particular examples. He states that if a person is struck by another or verbally abused by another, he should not strike him back or abuse him back but he should take his case to the proper authorities.[3]
- In Islam, there is no room for harming others simply out of spite in reaction to some harm that the other person did. If A harms B, it is not acceptable for B to do something simply for the sake of harming A in return. As stated above, he can either forgive A and put the matter behind him or he can go through proper steps to have his rights fulfilled.
- In the same way that one cannot harm others, he also does not have the right to harm himself, his body or those he is responsible for. In fact, al-Sindi explicitly states, a Muslim does not have the right to harm anything of Allah's creation.[4] This principle, then, should also extend to the animal kingdom and environment. A Muslim should not perform any act that is harmful to these two unless it is necessary for some overriding need.

Summary of the Hadith

- In Islam, one should never cause any unjustifiable harm to others.
- Similarly, one should not respond to another's harm by causing him harm. He can demand his *shareeah* rights but he cannot go beyond that to harm the other person further.

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[1] Cf., al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 239. Also see ibn Abdul Barr's statement in al-Magharaawi, vol. 12, p. 13.

[2] Al-Baitaar, p. 196.

[3] Al-Nawawi, *Sharh Matn*, p. 125.

[4] Al-Sindi, *Sharh*, p. 102.

Hadith #33
"Were People to be Given..."

عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا أَنَّ رَسُوْلَ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ
عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمِ قَالَ لَوْ يُعْطَى النَاسُ بِدَعْوَاهُمْ لاَدَّعَى رِجَالٌ
أَمْوَالَ قَوْمٍ وَدِمَاءَهُمْ وَلكِنِ البَيِّنَةُ عَلَى المُدَّعِي وَاليَمِيْنُ عَلَى
مَنْ أَنْكَرَ
حَدِيْثٌ حَسَنٌ رَوَاهُ البَيْهَقِيُّ وَغَيْرُهُ هَكَذَا وَبَعْضُهُ فِي
الصَّحِيْحَيْنِ

On the authority of ibn Abbaas (may Allah be pleased with them both) that the Messenger of Allah (Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) said, "Were people to be given according to their claims, men would claim the wealth and blood of the people. But the burden of proof is upon the plaintiff and the taking of an oath is upon the one who denies [the allegation]."
It is a *hasan* hadith. Al-Baihaqi and others recorded it in that fashion and parts of it are in the two *Sahih*s [of al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Selected Vocabulary

يعطى	- "given,"
بدعواهم	- "according with their claim," the ب signifies, "in accordance, with," while the هم means, "their"
رجال	- "men," plural of رجل
أموال	- "wealth"
قوم	- "people"
دماءهم	- literally, "their blood," in such context it refers to life
البيّنة	- "proof"
المدعّي	- "plaintiff, claimant"
اليمين	- "oath"
أنكر	- "denies"
هكذا	- "like that, in that way,"
بعضه	- "part of it"

Takhreej

This hadith was recorded by al-Baihaqi in *Sunan al-Kubra* with a *sahih* chain.[1]

It has been recorded by others with slightly different wordings. Al-Bukhari, Muslim, ibn Maajah, ibn Hibbaan and others record a hadith from ibn Abbaas with the words,

لَوْ يُعْطَى النَّاسُ بِدَعْوَاهُمْ لَادَّعَى نَاسٌ دِمَاءَ رِجَالٍ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ الْيَمِينَ عَلَى الْمُدَّعَى عَلَيْهِ

"Were the people to be given according to their claims, people would claim the blood and wealth of men. However, the defendant can resort to an oath." (This wording is that of Muslim.[2]) Ahmad and Abu Yala also have something very similar to the above.

Al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nasaai, al-Baihaqi and others also recorded from ibn Abbaas that the Prophet (peace be upon him) decided a case based on an oath by the defendant.

General Comments About the Hadith

This hadith is of extreme importance in that it states a founding principle of judgment and claims in Islam. Ibn Daqeeq said that this hadith is the greatest reference to turn to in the face of claims and disputes.[3]

The *shareeah* seeks to protect religion, life, wealth, mental capacity and familial ties and honor. In particular, wealth, life and honor need to be protected from false claims and accusations. The *shareeah* has laid down the principle that a person is presumed innocent unless proven otherwise. If no such evidence is brought forth, the accusations will be dropped and the person's wealth, life or honor will be protected.

The principles stated in this hadith are general and widely applicable. However, there are some exceptions that are mentioned in the books of fiqh.[4] The Shafiees and the majority of the scholars state that the principle of taking an oath from the defendant is used in cases related to wealth, property, prescribed punishments, marriage and divorce. Malik does not apply it to cases of marriage, divorce and freeing of slaves. He says that in those cases, the defendant is not asked to make an oath until the plaintiff offers some sort of evidence, even if it is just one witness. The Hanafis only apply it to cases related to wealth and property.[1]

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[1] Ibn Muhammad, p. 192. It is not clear to this author why al-Nawawi called this hadith ***hasan*** in the text. Its chain seems to be *sahih* and it is supported by hadith that are definitely *sahih.*

[2] Some people have objected to this hadith, claiming that it is a statement of ibn Abbaas instead of a hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him). However, it has been reported through authentic enough means to be considered a statement of the Prophet (peace be upon him). See al-Nawawi, *Sharh Saheeh*, vol. 12, pp. 2-3; ibn Daqeeq al-Eid, *Sharh*, p. 85.

[3] Ibn Daqeeq al-Eid, *Sharh*, p. 85.

[4] See, for example, al-Nawawi, *Sharh Matn*, pp. 126-7; ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 231; al-Haitami, *Fath*, pp. 242.

About the Narrator: ibn Abbaas

Ibn Abbaas was discussed in the commentary to Hadith Number 19.

"Were people to be given according to their claims, men would claim the people's wealth and blood."

Making a claim against somebody else is, practically not morally speaking, a very easy matter. If that were all it took to take other people's wealth and blood, there would be a great deal of evil on the earth. Mankind, save those who have been protected and guided by Allah, is wont to be greedy and overbearing. If they had the chance to take others' wealth and even ask for their lives, they would do so. This is a fact that is proven by this hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Therefore, steps must be taken to protect society from such behavior. These "steps" are the laws or judicial process that have been enacted that protect everyone's rights, life and property.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) specifically mentioned "men" in this hadith. Al-Haitami points out that the reason "men" is specifically mentioned is that, in general, they are the ones involved in such claims against other men. Another narration of this hadith mentions, "people," instead of men.[2] It is confirmed in the sunnah, that women have the right to bring cases against others, even on their own behalf or on the behalf of others. The goal of the *shareeah* is to bring about justice and to put an end to any form of wrongdoing. Hence, it would not make any sense to bar anyone from bringing a case to court if he or she was wronged in any way.[3]

Incidentally, the word *qaum* or "people," in the portion, "would claim the people's blood," is also often used just for men. However, it can be inclusive of women also. Here, it is understood to include both.[4]

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[1] See ibn Hajr, *Fath* (Maktaba Dar al-Baaz), vol. 5, p. 352.

[2] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 241.

[3] Cf., Abdullah al-Mutlaq, *Shahaadah al-Marah fi al-Fiqh al-Islaami* (Riyadh: Daar al-Muslim, 1413 A.H.), pp. 18-25. He presents many examples of women initiating legal cases during the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

[4] See al-Azhaari, p. 70.

“But the burden of proof is upon the plaintiff”

The Definition of “Plaintiff” and “Defendant”

In general, in every dispute, there are two parties. There is the claimant or plaintiff and the defendant. These are known as the *al-muddaee* (المُدَّعِي) and *al-muddaa alaihi* (المُدَّعَى عليه), respectively. There is some difference of opinion among the jurists as to the exact definition of these two terms. There are basically three views on this question.

The first view is that the plaintiff is the one who is not charged with anything or can remain silent of the two disputants. In other words, he is the person who could give up his claims and not press charges, for example. The defendant is the one who cannot remain silent or unaffected once the charges have been pressed. He is the one being sought after.[1]

A second view, which seems to be the stronger view in this author’s opinion[2], is that the plaintiff is the one who is claiming something other than what is apparent or what has not yet been established in the past. The defendant is the one who is on the opposite side, arguing according to what is apparent.[3]

This difference of opinion has a number of fiqh ramifications. For example, suppose a polytheistic husband and wife embrace Islam and then they differ in their claims about when they embraced Islam. The wife claims that they became Muslim at different times while the man claims they became Muslim at the same time. If the wife’s claim is upheld, the marriage is dissolved; but the marriage remains intact if the man’s claim is upheld. According to the first definition given above, ibn Rajab says that the wife is the “plaintiff” while the husband is the “defendant.”[4] Hence, the wife must bring forth evidence for her claim that her marriage should be dissolved. However, according to the second definition, the husband is the “plaintiff” because he is claiming something that is not the norm. Usually, people embrace Islam at different times. Therefore, the burden of proof will be upon him. If he does not present any proof, the wife’s claim will be accepted.[5]

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[1] Wahbah al-Zuhaili, *al-Fiqh al-Islaami wa Adillatuhu* (Beirut: Daar al-Fikr, 1985), vol. 6, p. 514. With respect to individual rights, the plaintiff is the one who has the need or right to press charges. He is also free to give up those rights and not press charges. If he does not press charges, the judge does not have the right to bring up the case even if he personally knows what has occurred. See Muhammad al-Bakr, *al-Sultah al-Qudhaaiyah wa Shakhsiyyah al-Qaadhi fi al-Nidhaam al-Islaami* (Cairo: al-Zuhraa li-l-Alaam al-Arabi, 1988), p. 275.

[2] It is the only definition that al-Haitami (*Fath*, p. 241) offers.

[3] See ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 230.

[4] This is because she could remain silent and accept matters as they are, returning to her husband from before the time they were Muslims. If she became Muslim first, her marriage would have been automatically annulled since her husband was a non-Muslim. In that case, when he became Muslim, she could not be forced to go back to him as his wife. However, if she wanted to go back to him, she would be free to do so.

[5] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, pp. 230-231.

A third view is that the defendant is the one rejecting a claim while the plaintiff is the one making a claim.[1]

The "Burden of Proof"

This hadith makes it clear that the burden of proof is upon the plaintiff or claimant. This is because he is the one making a claim that is not apparent or obviously true. Therefore, he must present his proof for his claim. The other party is considered free of guilt or responsibility unless proven otherwise. This is a fundamental legal maxim in Islam. The *Majallah* states,

> Freedom from liability is a fundamental principle. Therefore, if one person destroys the property of another and a dispute arises as to the amount thereof, the statement of the person causing such destruction shall be heard and the burden of proof as to any amount in excess of the testified amount is upon the owner of the property.[2]

The word that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used in this hadith which was translated as "burden of proof" is *bayyinah*, which implies something that makes a matter clear and evident. According to al-Bugha and Mistu, there is a consensus among the scholars that the meaning of *bayyinah* is witnesses.[3] Indeed, another hadith from *Sahih Muslim* states that there was a dispute between one Muslim and another concerning a well and the Prophet (peace be upon him) told the claimant,

شَاهِدَاكَ أَوْ يَمِينُهُ

"Your two witnesses or his oath."

There is no question that witnesses play a very important role in the courts of Islam. Witnesses are people who were present and saw what took place. They are the proof that what the person is claiming is true. Due to its importance, this topic of witnesses shall be discussed in some detail here. However, the exact meaning of *bayyinah* will be returned to in order to determine if witnesses is all this hadith referring to.

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[1] Cf., Muwafiq al-Deen Abdullah ibn Qudaamah, *al-Mughni* (Beirut: Daar al-Fikr, 1984), vol. 12, p. 163.

[2] Quoted in S. Mahmassani, *Falsafat al-Tashri fi al-Islam: The Philosophy of Jurisprudence in Islam* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1961), p. 171.

[3] Al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 244. Sultaan (p. 279) gives the same interpretation but he does not say that there is a consensus on this point.

The Criteria for Being an Acceptable Witness

Not everyone is qualified to be a witness. If anyone's witness were accepted, then it would be easy for fabricated or false testimony to be accepted in a court of law. This would defeat the purpose of attaining the truth and fulfilling everyone's rights. Therefore, Islam has laid down certain criteria that a person must meet to be considered an acceptable witness. These are:[1]

(1) The witness must be sane and competent.

(2) In general, the witness must be an adult. There are some exceptions to this wherein some scholars will allow the testimony of children.

(3) The witness must be a Muslim. In general, non-Muslims are not acceptable as witnesses unless it be in a case dealing with non-Muslims.

(4) The witness must be of sound memory. If someone is known to be senile or not able to recount what has occurred in the past, then his witness will not be considered acceptable.

(5) The witness must be a person of integrity and honesty. This, above all, implies that he is a good Muslim and fulfills his religious obligations while remaining away from the blatantly forbidden deeds.

Even if a witness meets the above requirements, his witness will not be accepted if there is a clear conflict of interest. For example, if the witness is closely related to either disputant, an open opponent to one of the parties or he is to gain from the outcome of the trial, his witness will not be considered acceptable.

The Importance of Giving One's Testimony

Once again, the attainment of truth and justice is emphasized in Islam. One of the most important means by which that is achieved is by people presenting what they know concerning issues of dispute. Therefore, it is very important that people offer their testimony and offer their testimony truthfully when called upon to do so. For this reason, appearing as witnesses and offering testimony is considered a communal obligation in Islam— if sufficient people fulfill this role, the others are absolved of responsibility. It can become an individual obligation if a particular person is the only one qualified to fulfill this responsibility.[2]

Allah says in the Quran,

ۚ وَلَا يَأْبَ ٱلشُّهَدَآءُ إِذَا مَا دُعُوا۟ ۚ

"And the witnesses should not refuse when they are called" (*al-Baqara* 282). In his commentary on this verse, ibn Katheer points out that according to

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[1] Cf., al-Mutlaq, pp. 15-18.

[2] See Abdullah al-Zibn, "*Hukm al-Shahaadah: Tahamalan wa Ada-an,*" *Majallah al-Bahooth al-Islaamiyah* (No. 7, Rajab-Shawaal 1403), pp. 249-254.

Qataada and others, the meaning of this verse is that when one is asked to be a witness to something, he should not refuse to witness it. The majority of the scholars state that it refers to giving one’s testimony. In other words, if one has agreed to witness something, then he cannot refuse to later give his testimony when asked to do so. Ibn Abbaas and al-Hasan al-Basri stated that the verse is in reference to both accepting the request to witness something as well as giving one’s testimony when called upon to do so.[1]

To conceal what one has witnessed is a sin. Allah says,

وَلَا تَكْتُمُوا۟ ٱلشَّهَـٰدَةَ ۚ وَمَن يَكْتُمْهَا فَإِنَّهُۥٓ ءَاثِمٌ قَلْبُهُۥ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ

“And conceal not the testimony, for he who hides it is certainly sinful of heart. And Allah is all-knowing of what you do” (*al-Baqara* 283).

Finally, giving false witness is one of the greatest sins that one can commit. Note the following hadith on the authority of Abu Bakra:

قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَلاَ أُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِأَكْبَرِ الْكَبَائِرِ ثَلاَثًا قَالُوا بَلَى يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ الإِشْرَاكُ بِاللَّهِ وَعُقُوقُ الْوَالِدَيْنِ وَجَلَسَ وَكَانَ مُتَّكِئًا فَقَالَ أَلا وَقَوْلُ الزُّورِ قَالَ فَمَا زَالَ يُكَرِّرُهَا حَتَّى قُلْنَا لَيْتَهُ سَكَتَ

“The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said three times, ‘Shall I not inform you of the greatest of the great sins?’ They said, ‘Certainly, O Messenger of Allah.’ He said, ‘Associating partners with Allah, being undutiful to one’s parents,’ and then he sat up while before he was reclining and said, ‘And certainly giving false witness,’ and he continued to say that until we said, ‘If only he would be silent.’” (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

The Witness Requirement

Islam does not require the same number of witnesses for every type of crime or transaction. Instead, depending on the seriousness of the matter, more or less witnesses may be required.

In the case of fornication or adultery, four men are required as witnesses to prove a person’s guilt. Allah says in the Quran,

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[1] Ibn Katheer, *Tafseer*, vol. 1, p. 360.

وَٱلَّذِينَ يَرۡمُونَ ٱلۡمُحۡصَنَٰتِ ثُمَّ لَمۡ يَأۡتُواْ بِأَرۡبَعَةِ شُهَدَآءَ فَٱجۡلِدُوهُمۡ ثَمَٰنِينَ
جَلۡدَةٗ وَلَا تَقۡبَلُواْ لَهُمۡ شَهَٰدَةً أَبَدٗاۚ وَأُوْلَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلۡفَٰسِقُونَ

“And those who accuse chaste women and produce not four witnesses, flog them with eighty stripes and reject their testimony forever. They are the evildoers” (*al-Noor* 4).

In the case of other crimes for which there is a stipulated legal punishment, like theft or alcohol consumption, two just and righteous men are sufficient to conclude that a person is guilty. Allah says in the Quran,

وَأَشۡهِدُواْ ذَوَيۡ عَدۡلٖ مِّنكُمۡ

“And take as witness two just persons among you” (*al-Talaaq* 2).

The Shafi’ees say that this condition of two witnesses is for every case that does not deal with wealth or money. Hence, it is for cases like marriage and divorce. In those cases, they state that one must have two witnesses to confirm those acts.[1]

In the case of matters related to wealth or money transactions, such as sales, renting and so forth, the witnesses required to prove a case are two male witnesses or one male witness and two females. This is based on the Quranic verse,

وَٱسۡتَشۡهِدُواْ شَهِيدَيۡنِ مِن رِّجَالِكُمۡۖ فَإِن لَّمۡ يَكُونَا رَجُلَيۡنِ فَرَجُلٞ
وَٱمۡرَأَتَانِ مِمَّن تَرۡضَوۡنَ مِنَ ٱلشُّهَدَآءِ

“And get two witnesses from among your men. And if there are not two men [available], then a man and two women, such as you agree for witnesses” (*al-Baqara* 282).

Female Witnesses

The last case cited above brings up the question of female witnesses. Since this is a widely misunderstood issue, it shall also be discussed separately in some detail.[2]

First, it should be noted that Islam is the religion that is based on revelation from the Creator. Allah, the Creator, knows the abilities and limitations of all of His creatures. He has laid down His laws, based on His wisdom and mercy, in such a way that no one is unfairly burdened beyond his normal means. Furthermore, the laws are concerned with normal and usual circumstances and are not founded on unusual or exceptional circumstances. When it comes to the question of witnesses or testimony, the normal abilities of both men and women are taken into consideration.[1] This is why the rulings concerning female witnesses differs from that concerning male witnesses.

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[1] Al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 244.

[2] The following discussion is based on al-Mutlaq, pp. 26-74.

In some cases, a woman's testimony by herself is sufficient; in other cases, it is equivalent to that of a man; in yet other cases, it is equivalent to half of that of a man; sometimes, according to some scholars, it is not accepted.

The cases where only women's testimony is accepted are those matters concerning which men are not familiar or do not have privy to such information. For example, cases related to women's menses, post-childbirth bleeding and so forth are cases wherein women's testimony alone are going to be accepted. According to Mahmassani, all the schools of fiqh accept this principle, they differ only as to the number of female witnesses required in different cases.[2] Similarly, a woman's testimony concerning breastfeeding, pregnancy, the birth of a child and the child's crying at birth will be accepted on her own, according to the Hanbalis. The Prophet (peace be upon him) separated a man and his wife when a woman came testifying that she had breastfed both of them. (Recorded by al-Bukhari.) Abdul Razzaaq records that Uthman followed that same practice of accepting one woman's testimony that she had breastfed specific people.

In other cases, the testimony of a woman is exactly equal to the testimony of a man. This is, in particular, true for what is today termed, "expert testimony". If a woman is a doctor, for example, and she testifies based on her knowledge and expertise, there would not be any difference between her testimony and a male doctor's testimony. Another example is that of a woman tailor. If she testifies in a court that a certain garment is not up to standard quality, her testimony would be accepted and would be the same as if a male tailor had made that testimony. There is precedence in this approach in some hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and actions of Umar ibn al-Khattaab. The Hanafis, for example, accept the testimony of one woman's sighting of the moon for Ramadhan because it is a report of a religious nature for which one woman is sufficient. This is also the view of the Hanbalis and some Shafiees.

In some cases, though, the witness of two women will be considered equivalent to the witness of one man. These are in those areas concerning which women usually do not have as much experience as men, especially in an Islamic environment.

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[1] Mahmassani wrote, "It is an accepted social fact that women are less experienced than men in matters of practical life. This has been the case since the ancient days. A number of legal systems did not accept the testimony of women at all, such as the Jewish law; where it was accepted, there were certain reservations. For example, the legal codes of some of the Swiss cantons, until the beginning of the 19th Century, regarded the testimony of two women as equivalent to the testimony of one man, and similarly, in the French law the testimony of a woman was not accepted as equal to that of a man. Even the Code Napoleon, before it was amended in the latter part of the 19th Century, excluded the testimony of women in testamentary dispositions and in a number of transactions pertaining to personal status." Mahmassani, pp. 179-180.

[2] Mahmassani, p. 180.

The first of these categories in which two women are equal to one man are matters related to wealth, monetary matters and financial transactions. There is a consensus that a woman's testimony is acceptable in these matters and that her testimony is equal to "one-half" of a man's. This view is clearly based on the verse in the Quran,

فَإِن لَّمۡ يَكُونَا رَجُلَيۡنِ فَرَجُلٞ وَٱمۡرَأَتَانِ مِمَّن تَرۡضَوۡنَ مِنَ ٱلشُّهَدَآءِ

"And if there are not two men [available as witnesses], then a man and two women, such as you agree for witnesses" (*al-Baqara* 282).

The purpose of that command is that when such contracts are to be witnessed, male witnesses should be sought. However, if they cannot be found or are not available, female witnesses may be used although females are usually not involved in such procedures.

The Malikis and the Hanbalis say that a judge may decide a case based on two female witnesses and the oath of the plaintiff. Ibn Taimiya says that one female witness and the oath would be sufficient. Note that the verse above is simply talking about the procedure of getting witnesses during the contract or agreement. This does not mean, however, as ibn al-Qayyim pointed out, that a judge can only decide a case if there is at least one male witness and two female witnesses. The above procedure is simply to safeguard one's wealth. If a plaintiff has a male witness and two female witnesses, that should be sufficient to prove his case. However, that is different from a judge deciding a case. The judge has much more latitude and flexibility. He may decide a case even with just two female witness or one female witness if he has reason to believe the testimony given.

According to many scholars, the issues of marriage, divorce, returning to one's divorced wife, paternal and maternal relations and similar matters are dealt with in the same way as monetary matters. In other words, two female witnesses will be equivalent to one male witness in such cases. This is the view of the Hanafis, Dhaahiris, ibn Taimiya, ibn al-Qayyim as well as a number of early scholars. The Hanafis, however, state that one man must testify with them, as explicitly stated in the verse quoted above concerning financial transactions.

The evidence that woman's testimony is to be accepted in such cases is found in the verse,

وَأَشۡهِدُواْ ذَوَيۡ عَدۡلٖ مِّنكُمۡ

"And take as witnesses two just persons among you [Muslims]" (*al-Talaaq* 2). This verse is considered *mujmal* or "undetailed, ambiguous". Its explanation or details are found in *al-Baqara* 282 quoted above: two just men are required or one man and two women.

Furthermore, ibn Hazm records an incident in which a man divorced his wife and there were four women present at that incident. Umar accepted the evidence of those four women and separated that man from his wife.[1]

In addition, there are some hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) that are stated in a general fashion, not implying that they are particular for the case of business transactions only. For example, the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated,

شَهَادَةُ امْرَأَتَيْنِ تَعْدِلُ شَهَادَةَ رَجُلٍ

"The witness of two women is equal to the witness of a man." (Recorded by Muslim.)

Indeed, it is argued, if the woman's testimony is accepted in the case of business transactions, it should be accepted in the case of divorce and a man returning to his wife. This is because this would be something that she may witness on a more regular basis and would be something that she would be more familiar with. Hence, if her witness is accepted in the one case, it should also be accepted in the other. This was part of ibn Taimiya's and ibn al-Qayyim's argument on this question.[2]

In cases of "unintentional felonies," such as involuntary manslaughter, which require monetary retribution, the four schools of fiqh accept the testimony of women. However, the Hanafis, Shafiees and Hanbalis require the addition of one man to the women's testimony. The Malikis, Dhaahiris and one opinion among the Hanbalis is that such is not a requirement. This view is based on the judgments made by Ali in which only women were witnesses of such offenses.

The Hanbalis and Malikis also accept women's testimony in cases of voluntary or intentional "felonies" which do not require a *hudood* punishment.

There are some areas in which the four schools of fiqh do not accept female testimony because, in general, they are areas in which they are not very much familiar and the resultant penalties are heavy. If there is any doubt concerning a crime, the *hudood* punishments are not to be meted out. Such crimes must be proven in a definite fashion. For this reason, these scholars do not implement the *hudood* punishments based on the testimony of female witnesses. Al-Zuhri is reported to have said, "The sunnah since the time of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and the two caliphs after him is that the testimony of women is not permissible in the cases of *hudood*."[1] Abdul Razzaaq also records something similar from Ali ibn Abu Taalib.

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[1] Ali ibn Hazm, *Al-Muhalla* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Tijaari), vol. 9, p. 397.

[2] Ahmad ibn Taimiya, *Ikhtiyaaraat ibn Taimiya* (Cairo: Matbaah al-Sunnah al-Muhammadiyah, 1369 A.H.), p. 359; Muhammad ibn al-Qayyim, *Ilaam al-Muwaqieen an Rabb al-Alameen* (Beirut: Daar al-Kutub al-Hadeetha, 1389 A.H.), vol. 1, p. 100. These two were also quoted in al-Mutlaq, p. 53.

They also argue that such crimes are usually committed under particular circumstances, involving crime, fear and so forth. Under such circumstances, it would be difficult for a Muslim woman, who is usually sheltered from such things, to be considered a sound and trustworthy witness.

Ibn Hazm argues that in every type of case, the testimony of a woman is accepted and is equal to half that of a man. Therefore, for example, the witness of eight women would be sufficient to prove the act of illegal sexual intercourse. This was also the opinion of Ataa ibn Abu Ribaah and Hamaad ibn Abu Sulaimaan of the early scholars. Taawoos said that the woman's testimony should be accepted in every matter except illegal sexual intercourse as, he said, she should not be looking at such a matter (meaning that a woman's extreme modesty and shyness would prevent her from seeing such an act and being able to witness or testify about it later).

The evidence for this view is the generality of the hadith above stating that two women's testimony is equal to that of one man. Furthermore, the narration from al-Zuhri quoted above is not acceptable. The chain contains weak narrators and al-Zuhri's narrations directly from the Prophet (peace be upon him) (that is, his *mursal* reports) are considered weak.

Abdul Razzaaq presents a report in which Umar ibn al-Khattaab used the testimony of a man's wife against him and punished the man for drinking alcohol. Ibn al-Qayyim also presents an incident in which Umar was about to punish a person for illegal sexual intercourse on the basis of the testimony of only one woman, who claimed she was raped, along with circumstantial evidence. When he discovered that the evidence was forged, he did not punish the person.

If these reports are authentic, it seems that the strongest view would be that female testimony is accepted and acted upon even in cases resulting in *hudood* punishments.

The Meaning of *Bayyinah*

In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated that the plaintiff or claimant must provide the *bayyinah* or "proof" for his claim. As stated above, many writers seem to think that *bayyinah* refers only to witnesses. Indeed, al-Bugha and Mistu claimed a consensus on that point. However, that does not seem to be correct. The meaning of *bayyinah* is much more comprehensive and also applies to means of proof other than witnesses.

Al-Mutlaq stated, "*Al-bayyinah* is a noun that encompasses all means of establishing the truth. Providing witnesses is one of its more important means and that is why he [the Prophet (peace be upon him)] told the claimant,

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[1] This statement was recorded by Abdul Razzaaq, ibn Abu Shaibah and al-Baihaqi.

'Your witnesses or his oath.'"[1] According to Mahmassani, "*Bayyinah* (evidence) in the linguistic sense means the evident or obvious. In law it has been used to connote 'strong proof'... because it makes the truth evident and obvious."[2]

Ibn al-Qayyim argues that the concept of *bayyinah* is something that is misunderstood by the jurists. They have greatly restricted its meaning while there is no call to do so. He wrote,

> *Al-bayyinah* in the speech of Allah and His Messenger and the speech of the Companions is a word for everything that makes the truth plain and clear. It is more general than the jurists use of the word *bayyinah*, as they restrict it to two witnesses or a witness and an oath... For that reason, they make a mistake in their understanding of the texts and apply them in a way that they are not meant to be applied...
>
> The word *bayinnah* in the book of Allah is a word used for anything that makes the truth clear. Allah has said, "Verily, We sent our messengers with clear proofs (*bayyinaat*)" [*al-Hadeed* 25]... [Ibn al-Qayyim quotes a number of verses and then continues:] There are numerous examples of that nature. The word *bayyinah* was never restricted to mean witnesses. Indeed, the Book [of Allah] never uses the word in that sense. If that is known, then the statement of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to the claimant, "Do you have any *bayyinah*?" and the statement of Umar, "The burden of *bayyinah* is upon the claimant,"... means, "Do you have any proof that will demonstrate the truth, being either witnesses or some evidence." Under all circumstances, the Lawgiver intends to make the truth evident by any means of proof available... No right that is demonstrated by proof should ever be repelled. [If that were done,] the rights of Allah and His servants would be lost. The demonstration of truth, therefore, is not contingent upon any particular form of evidence...[3]

Therefore, this hadith does not mean that if a person cannot present two witnesses or a witness and an oath for his claim that his claim will not then be listened to. He may be able to present some other direct proof other than witnesses. If these other forms of proof are convincing, the judge must decide in his favor even if he cannot present any witnesses to support his claim. The goal is the attainment of truth and its enactment. Witnesses are an important means of reaching that goal but they are not the only means.

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[1] Al-Mutlaq, p. 10.

[2] Mahmassani, p. 176.

[3] Ibn al-Qayyim, *'Ilaam* (Dar al-Jeel), vol. 1, p. 90.

Circumstantial Evidence and Conclusive Presumption

The judge may also look into any relevant *qaraain*[1] (قرائن) or circumstantial or conclusive evidence. In other words, the judge may take into consideration the clear signs that lead to a definite conclusion, although they are not at the level that evidently prove a certain conclusion.[2] According to al-Sadlaan, the judge may take such into consideration when there is also clear evidence or admission or when clear evidence or admission is lacking. Indeed, a case may be decided solely on the basis of such circumstantial or indirect evidence.[3] The validity of such evidence goes back to what ibn al-Qayyim was quoted as saying above: the goal is to reach the truth and no signs or bits of evidence that point to the truth should be ignored or discounted.

Al-Sadlaan points out that this implies that the modern forms of criminal investigation can be used in making judicial conclusions in Islam. If such is not done, rights will be lost and injustice will be allowed to prevail. Any form of such injustice is opposed by Islam.[4]

The problem with such evidence is that jurists or judges may differ as to the strength of such evidence. The classic example is whether an unmarried woman who becomes pregnant should be punished for committing illegal sexual intercourse. In other words, is the fact that she is pregnant a strong enough sign that she is guilty of that crime? According to the Malikis, ibn Taimiya and ibn al-Qayyim, that is a sufficient sign to charge her with illegal sexual intercourse. The Malikis argue that if she were to claim that she was raped, her claim would not be accepted unless there were some signs that point to her truthfulness. If she had come bleeding or screaming for help earlier, that would have been a sign that she was raped. But if nothing of that nature occurred earlier, her claim of rape when her pregnancy had become apparent would not be accepted.

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[1] *Qaraain* may be defined as signs that point to a conclusion that is not otherwise obvious and clear. They point to that conclusion because the sign usually accompanies a certain result or indicates a certain event. They may not be clear and conclusive but when added together, they may lead to a definite conclusion. An example from the Prophet's hadith is when a virgin woman is proposed to by a man, her silence is a sign of her approval. Although it is not an express statement of her approval, her remaining silent is usually because she has no objection. In the *Majallah* it talks about the "inference which amounts to the degree of certainty. Example: A is seen leaving an empty house with a blood-stained knife in his hand; B thereupon enters the house and finds C, who has just had his throat cut. There is no doubt that A is the murderer of C and no regard is given to the possibility that C killed himself." [See Mahmassani, p. 192; C. R. Tyser, D. G. Demetriades and Ismail Haqqi Effendi, trans., *The Mejelle* (Lahore: Law Publishing Company, 1980), pp. 306-307, Article 1741.] The example they gave is somewhat simplistic and with today's more advanced criminal investigation and forensic methods, one may require more than what was stated in that example. In fact, Mahmassani (p. 197) added to the above example, "Such certainty undoubtedly depends upon the circumstances of the case, for it is possible that the frightened person leaving the house might be a relative of the victim, having hurried to the house upon hearing the screams of the victim, picked up the blood-stained knife..."

[2] According to al-Sadlaan, all of the four schools of fiqh rely on *qaraain* in a number of decisions, although some of them warn against the use of *qaraain* or claim not to rely upon it. For a detailed discussion of the different views, see Saalih al-Sadlaan, *al-Qaraain wa Dauraha fi al-Ithbaat fi al-Shareeah al-Islaamiyah* (Riyadh: Daar Balansiyah, 1416 A.H.), pp. 39-60.

[3] Al-Sadlaan, *al-Qaraain*, p. 6.

[4] Al-Sadlaan, *al-Qaraain*, p. 11.

According to the Hanafis, Shafiees, Ahmad and the Dhaahiris, her becoming pregnancy is not a clear enough sign to charge her with the crime of illegal sexual intercourse. It is possible that she became pregnant due to rape although she is not able to prove that. It is also possible that a man's semen could have entered her body without the actual act of penetration. Therefore, they argue that she should not be punished for the act of illegal sexual intercourse since such punishments are not to be enacted when there is any amount of doubt involved.[1]

Nowadays, the moral laxity of the people is much greater. At the same time, though, there are many more ways by which a woman could get pregnant even without her knowledge.[2] Therefore, it is difficult to say which of the above opinions is the stronger. The overriding principle, though, is that the person is free of blame until proven otherwise.

Umar ibn al-Khattaab seemed to take an approach based on the situation. Malik records that he said that the punishment is to be implemented when the woman becomes pregnant or admits her crime.[3] On the other hand, ibn Abu Shaibah records that the people were accusing a woman of fornication. Umar was told good things about the woman, so he went to her to ask her about her situation. She stated that she prayed during the late night and fell deep asleep. When she awoke, she was being raped. Based on her statement, Umar let her go.[4]

"the taking of an oath is upon the one who denies [the allegation]."

If a case is presented to a judge, he first listens to the claim.[5] Then he asks the defendant if he admits to the charges made against him. Admission is considered one of the strongest proofs against a person. If a person admits to something, he is bound by his own admission. Therefore, if the defendant admits the charges, the case is decided in favor of the plaintiff.[6]

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[1] Cf., al-Sadlaan, pp. 61-67. The two sides also present different reports to substantiate their claims. Al-Sadlaan himself concludes that the second opinion, that of the majority, is the stronger opinion.

[2] Such as being artificially inseminated while having a gynecological check-up or even being raped while under anesthesia and so forth.

[3] According to al-Albaani, this report is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Irwa*, vol. 8, p. 31.

[4] Al-Albaani says that this report is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Irwa*, vol. 8, p. 30.

[5] It is also the role of the judge to determine if the case is a valid case. There are some conditions that the plaintiff and the case must meet in order for the case to be considered valid. Cf., al-Zuhaili, vol. 6, pp. 511-513.

[6] It should also be noted that if a person admits to something or confesses something, he is not entitled to retract that admission if it involves the rights of other individuals. Cf., Mahmassani, p. 174.

If the defendant does not admit to the charges, the plaintiff is then requested to present his proof. In general, if the plaintiff presents sufficient evidence, the case is decided in his favor. However, the defendant does have the right to respond to the plaintiff's evidence.[1] Indeed, there is a hadith that states,

فَإِذَا جَلَسَ بَيْنَ يَدَيْكَ الْخَصْمَانِ فَلا تَقْضِيَنَّ حَتَّى تَسْمَعَ مِنَ الْآخَرِ كَمَا سَمِعْتَ مِنَ
الأَوَّلِ

"If two disputants sit in front of you, do not decide the case for one of them until you listen to the other as you listened to the first."[2]

If the claimant cannot offer any clear proof for his allegation, he may ask that the defendant to take an oath that he is free of the charges.[3] The defendant may then have the charge or claim dropped simply by taking an oath by Allah that the charge or claim is false. Since the defendant is claiming what seems to be the apparent fact, he is not required to present any proof for his position. By mere appearance, he always seems to be innocent of the claim or charges. Therefore, all that is required of him to clear himself when the claimant cannot offer any strong proof or witnesses is an oath. He is not forced to present any proof that he is innocent or free of the claims against him.

When is the Defendant Asked to Make an Oath?

According to Abu Hanifah, al-Shafi'ee and Ahmad, in every case that the plaintiff requests it, the defendant is to be asked to make an oath. They do not distinguish between any particular defendants.

The Malikis, on the other hand, say that the defendant is not forced to take an oath unless it is proven that there is some relationship, such as a business relationship, between the plaintiff and the defendant or if it is plausible that the plaintiff could have such a claim against the defendant. Their reasoning for this is that they do not want claims to be used as a way of bringing harm to others. They also do not want to leave the door open for the ignorant people to bring up charges against the righteous or noble people. If there is no warrant for a claim, it will just be dismissed. The defendant will not be disturbed in such a case.[4]

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[1] For more on defense rights, see al-Bakr, pp. 279-291.

[2] Recorded by Ahmad, Abu Dawood and others. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Irwa*, vol. 8, pp. 226-228.

[3] This oath is known as *yameen al-sabr* (يمين الصبر) and *al-ghamoos* (الغموس). It is called *yameen al-sabr* (the oath of withholding) because it withholds the person's own right. See al-Nawawi, *Sharh Matn*, p. 127.

[4] Cf., ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 237; al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 243; al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 247.

There is no question that the view of the other three jurists is much closer to the letter of what the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated. However, Malik's opinion has a good purpose to it. Perhaps his opinion should be modified for only those people who are proven to bring up false charges against others. If a person is known to bring up false charges, in that case, the defendant will not be brought and asked to make an oath that he is innocent. Allah knows best.

The Judge Should Remind the Defendant of Allah

It is considered proper for the judge to remind the defendant of Allah before he makes him state his oath. He should tell him to swear by Allah, the One besides whom there is no god, that such and such is true. He also should remind the defendant of the great sin of making a false oath.[1] Al-Bukhari and Muslim record that ibn Abbaas acted in this fashion when two women were brought to him in a civil dispute. He reminded them of Allah and then read to them the verse,

إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ يَشۡتَرُونَ بِعَهۡدِ ٱللَّهِ وَأَيۡمَٰنِهِمۡ ثَمَنٗا قَلِيلًا أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ لَا خَلَٰقَ لَهُمۡ فِي
ٱلۡأٓخِرَةِ وَلَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ ٱللَّهُ وَلَا يَنظُرُ إِلَيۡهِمۡ يَوۡمَ ٱلۡقِيَٰمَةِ وَلَا يُزَكِّيهِمۡ
وَلَهُمۡ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٞ

"Verily, those who purchase a small gain at the cost of Allah's Covenant and their oaths, they shall have no portion in the Hereafter. Neither will Allah speak to them, nor look at them on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He purify them, and they shall have a painful torment" (*ali-Imraan* 77).

Making an oath is an "easy thing," in the sense that it does not take much effort and it may be easy for the person to get away with a false oath. Among the important hadith that may deter a person from making a false oath are the following:

When a claimant came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) about a case, the Prophet (peace be upon him) told him that he must present his witnesses or the defendant may make an oath. The man argued, "He will make an oath and he will not care [if he is making a false oath]." Then the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

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[1] Al-Bugha and Mistu (p. 247) also state that the judge should bring a copy of the Quran and make the person swear upon it if he is a Muslim. Commenting on this opinion, ibn Qudaamah wrote that a judge in Yemen, named Ibn Maazin, used to make the people swear upon the Quran because it contains the word of Allah and His names. However, this is an addition to what the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his followers did without any evidence or support for it. Ibn Qudaamah concludes, "The action of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and his Companions is not to be left for the action of ibn Maazin or anyone else." Ibn Qudaamah, vol. 12, p. 119.

مَنْ حَلَفَ عَلَى يَمِينِ صَبْرٍ وَهُوَ فِيهَا فَاجِرٌ يَقْتَطِعُ بِهَا مَالَ امْرِئٍ مُسْلِمٍ لَقِيَ اللَّهَ يَوْمَ
الْقِيَامَةِ وَهُوَ عَلَيْهِ غَضْبَانُ

"Whoever swears an oath (*yameen sabr*), and he is being treacherous in it, just to misappropriate the right of a Muslim man, he will meet Allah on the Day of Resurrection and He will be angry with him." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim; the wording is that of al-Bukhari.)

Muslim also recorded the following hadith on the authority of Abu Umamah,

مَنِ اقْتَطَعَ حَقَّ امْرِئٍ مُسْلِمٍ بِيَمِينِهِ فَقَدْ أَوْجَبَ اللَّهُ لَهُ النَّارَ وَحَرَّمَ عَلَيْهِ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَالَ لَهُ
رَجُلٌ وَإِنْ كَانَ شَيْئًا يَسِيرًا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ وَإِنْ قَضِيبًا مِنْ أَرَاكٍ

"For he who [wrongfully] appropriated the right of a Muslim man by a [false] oath, Allah obligates the Hell-fire and forbids Paradise." A man said to him, "Even if it is something minor, o Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him)?" He answered, "Even if it is a branch from the Araak tree."[1]

Siddiqi's comment on this hadith is as follows,

> For a Muslim nothing is so damaging as the fact that he should go to the extent of taking a false oath in the name of Allah and that too for some material benefit over which he has no legitimate claim. It implies that such a person has no fellow feeling, no respect for the Lord, and he is absolutely bereft of the sense of fairness and justice and is consumed by a lust for material possessions.[2]

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[1] In their commentary to this hadith, al-Khinn, et al., wrote, "The apparent meaning of the hadith is the one who misappropriates a right shall be forever in the Hell-fire. However, it is understood to refer to the case where a person considers that act permissible and dies with that belief without repenting." [See Mustafa Saeed al-Khinn, Mustafa al-Bugha, Muhyi al-Deen Mistu, Ali al-Shirbihi and Muhammad Ameen Lutfi, *Nuzhat al-Mutaqeen Sharh Riyaadh al-Saaliheen* (Beirut: Muassasat al-Risaalah, 1984), vol. 1, p. 239.] Unfortunately, they only present one interpretation for that hadith. Another interpretation that seems more likely and is applicable in a wider sense is: The hadith means that the person is deserving of Hell, although Allah may forgive him or he may make a sincere repentance; otherwise, the person will be forbidden Paradise when the first group of believers enter Paradise. It will be a must that he be sent to Hell. After some time, he will be removed from Hell and entered into Paradise due to his faith. Cf., al-Nawawi, *Sharh Sahih*, vol. 2, p. 161.

[2] Siddiqi, vol. 1, p. 78, fn. 239. His note continues, "Imam Nawawi has made it clear that it is wrong to infer on the basis of this hadith that highhandedness is permissible in case of a non-Muslim. The right of a non-Muslim must also be respected, for Islam does not permit its

What if the Defendant Refuses the Oath?

According to the Hanafis and the Hanbalis, if the defendant is requested to take the oath but he refuses to do so, the case is decided in favor of the plaintiff. The reasoning is that, obviously, if the charges against the defendant were not true, there would be no reason for him to refuse the oath. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

الْيَمِينُ عَلَى الْمُدَّعَى عَلَيْهِ

"The oath is upon the defendant." (Recorded by al-Bukhari.) The word *ala* على ("upon") implies obligation. The sane and religious person would not fail to fulfill this obligation upon him if the plaintiff's case were not true.

The Malikis and Shafiees take a very different approach to this question. According to them, if the defendant refuses to take an oath, he can ask that the plaintiff be made to take an oath. This is because the defendant is assumed to be innocent and, therefore, he cannot be asked to do anything if there is no evidence against him. Simply because he is not willing to make an oath is not sufficient to prove that he must be guilty. He may be avoiding a false oath as well as, out of fear of Allah, not wanting to make too many oaths out of fear that he might make a mistake. Perhaps he simply does not recall the details of the case. Given these possibilities, the case cannot be decided against him solely because he is not willing to make an oath.[1]

Based on the hadith, though, it seems that the defendant must be forced to take an oath. Only if the defendant offers a good reason for refusing the oath should the case not then be decided against him. For example, if he swears that he cannot recall the details of the case, he should not be forced to take an oath nor should the case automatically be decided against him. Allah knows best.

Can the Plaintiff be Asked to Make an Oath?

Suppose the defendant refuses to make such an oath— since something is alleged against him concerning which no proof has been given--- and the judge then makes the plaintiff make an oath that what he claims is true, must the plaintiff now make the oath?

According to the Shafiees, the plaintiff must now make the oath. If he refuses to do so and is not willing to make such an oath, in essence, he is deciding the case against himself. This might be based on the hadith from ibn Umar that the Prophet (peace be upon him) turned the making of the oath back

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infringement. Here in this hadith the word 'Muslim' has been stressed with a view to emphasizing the fact that, apart from other considerations, the person has no regard even for the brotherhood of Islam."

[1] Cf., al-Bugha and Mistu, pp. 246-7.

to the one who was demanding his rights (the plaintiff). This hadith is recorded by al-Daaraqutni, al-Baihaqi and al-Haakim. However, its chain is weak[1]

However, the Hanafis argue that such is not the case. The plaintiff is not asked to make an oath in any of the hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him), such as this one under discussion here.[2]

Evidence Presented After the Defendant Takes an Oath

When the claimant does not present any proof, the case is dropped when the defendant takes an oath. On that point, there is no difference of opinion. However, there is a difference of opinion as to what should be done if the plaintiff offers proof after the defendant has already taken an oath.

One opinion is that the oath is a weak method of proof and by itself it does not terminate the dispute. Therefore, if evidence is offered later, it may overturn an oath made by a defendant. It is narrated that Umar said, "A lying oath is more deserving of rejection than trustworthy evidence." This is the view of the Hanafis, Shafiees and Hanbalis.

Malik allows the entrance of new evidence after an oath by the defendant only if the plaintiff was not aware of that evidence at the time of the oath. But if the plaintiff was aware of that evidence but did not present it and, instead, preferred to put the defendant to an oath, he cannot later present that evidence. Al-Ghazzaali of the Shafiee school is also of this view.

A third opinion is that the oath is decisive and no further evidence may be presented later. In other words, the case is over and decided. This is the view of the Dhaahiris.[3]

It seems, Allah knows best, that the Maliki view, that only allows new evidence if the plaintiff was unaware of it previously, is the strongest in the light of the goals of the *shareeah*: justice and the fulfillment of rights.

Deciding a Case Based on One Witness and an Oath by the Plaintiff

It could be the case that the plaintiff only has one witness to support his case. However, the plaintiff may also be willing to swear an oath that what he is claiming is true. The question arises as to whether that one witness and oath would be enough to tilt the case in his favor.

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[1] That hadith was declared weak by ibn Hajr, al-Sanaani and al-Albaani. See Ahmad ibn Hajr, *Talkhees al-Habeer fi Takhreej Ahadeeth al-Raafii al-Kabeer* (Madinah: 1964), vol. 4, p. 209; al-Sanaani, vol. 4, p. 1948; al-Albaani, *Irwa*, vol. 8, pp. 267-268. Logically speaking, this author has a problem with the Shafiee view. If the defendant knows that the charges against him are not true— implying that the plaintiff is either lying or deluded— why would he possibly be willing to request the plaintiff to make an oath and have the decision made in his favor? Granted, this author is dealing with this issue at a theoretical level while the jurists were dealing with it at a practical level. Hence, the logic behind such an act may have been clear to them.

[2] Cf., al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 246.

[3] Cf., Mahmassani, pp. 190-192.

According to the Hanafis, such is not sufficient. The plaintiff must have a "complete" evidence, meaning two witnesses. If he does not, the defendant is simply required to make an oath to clear himself. Their evidence for that position is the hadith from *Sahih Muslim*,

شَاهِدَاكَ أَوْ يَمِينُهُ

"Your two witnesses or his oath." They also base it on the generality of the meaning of the hadith,

الْيَمِينُ عَلَى الْمُدَّعَى عَلَيْهِ

"The oath is upon the defendant." (Recorded by al-Bukhari.)

According to the Malikis, Shafiees and Hanbalis, a case may be decided on the basis of one witness and an oath by the plaintiff. They say that this is valid in cases related to money and wealth only. Their proof for their position is the hadith in *Sahih Muslim* that states that the Prophet (peace be upon him) decided a case based on one witness and an oath. This has also been reported from Abu Bakr, Ali ibn Abu Taalib and Umar ibn Abdul Azeez.[1]

There is no question that this hadith just referred to specifies the above hadith that seem to require two witnesses and requires an oath only on the part of the defendant. Hence, the Prophet's example must be accepted and followed in this case.[2] Furthermore, as was stated earlier, the *bayyinah* or evidence need not be restricted to witnesses. A person's oath may also be used to support his case.

Ibn al-Qayyim wrote,

> A judge may give judgement in cases other than those involving the rights of God on the testimony of one man whose integrity is established. God did not make it a duty for judges not to give judgement save on the testimony of two witnesses but merely ordered the owner of a right to safeguard his rights by two male witnesses or one man and two women. This does not mean that a judge may not give judgement on any lesser testimony. In fact, the Prophet gave judgement on the basis of

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[1] Cf., Mahmassani, p. 179.

[2] The Hanafis argue that the hadith quoted goes against the Quranic injunction of having two witnesses. A solitary (*ahaad*) hadith cannot be accepted as a kind of abrogation for the Quranic verse. However, this is actually not a case of abrogation but a case of particularization. Furthermore, as ibn al-Qayyim mentioned, the Quranic ruling is simply meant to safeguard rights and it does not mean that a judge cannot decide a case unless the person brings forth two witnesses.

> one witness and an oath and even on the basis of one testimony only.[1]

Ibn al-Qayyim also stated, “The methods by which a judge gives judgement are of greater latitude than those through which God has guided the owner of a right to safeguard it.”[2]

A Judgment Does not Render the Unlawful Lawful

The judge will make a decision based on the evidence or oaths made in front of him. Obviously, though, his decision may not be in agreement with the truth of the matter, for example, due to deception on the part of one of the litigants or lying witnesses. The judgment may end up in favor of the liar or cheater. If the litigant knows that he has lied or acted falsely, then what is decided for him does not become lawful for him. It would be much better for him to give it up and admit his wrongdoing than to take such wrongful gains. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated,

إِنَّكُمْ تَخْتَصِمُونَ إِلَيَّ وَلَعَلَّ بَعْضَكُمْ أَلْحَنُ بِحُجَّتِهِ مِنْ بَعْضٍ فَمَنْ قَضَيْتُ لَهُ بِحَقِّ أَخِيهِ
شَيْئًا بِقَوْلِهِ فَإِنَّمَا أَقْطَعُ لَهُ قِطْعَةً مِنَ النَّارِ فَلَا يَأْخُذْهَا

“You come to me as litigants. Perhaps, one of you is better in presenting his argument than the other. For whoever I decide in his favor according to what I have heard, if I have decided anything for someone from the rights of his brother, he should not take it for I have portioned for him a portion of the Hell-fire.” (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

Recorded by al-Baihaqi

Al-Baihaqi

Abu Bakr Ahmad ibn al-Husain ibn Ali al-Baihaqi al-Naisaboori was born in 384 A.H (994 C.E.). He hailed from Baihaq, which is a stretch of towns just outside of Naisaboor, Persia. He began his travels in search of hadith at the age of fifteen. He traveled to Naisaboor, Baghdad, Kufah, Makkah, Hijaz and other places. After traveling and gathering together hadith, he began to write various books.

He wrote a large number books. Some of the most important include *Kitaab al-Adaab*, *Dalaail al-Nubuwah*, *al-Asma wa al-Sifaat*, *al-Itiqaad*, *Bayaan Khata man Khata ala al-Shafii*, *Shuab al-Imaan* and *al-Zuhd al-*

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[1] Quoted in Mahmassani, p. 183.

[2] Quoted in Mahmassani, p. 183.

Kabeer. In the field of hadith, he is best known for his rather large *al-Sunan al-Kubra.* In fact, if one sees the words, as is the case here with the *Forty Hadith* of al-Nawawi, "Recorded by al-Baihaqi," it means it is in *al-Sunan al-Kubra.*

He was well-known for his piety, honesty and justice. He was not just a scholar of hadith but he was also a fine jurist in his own right.

Al-Baihaqi was a proponent of the Shafiee school of fiqh. Imam al-Haramain stated that al-Baihaqi was the only follower of Imam al-Shafiee's school that Imam al-Shafiee owes a debt to. This is because in al-Baihaqi's works, he demonstrated that al-Shafiee's opinions were in accord with the sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and he refuted those who tried to refute al-Shafiee.[1]

Al-Baihaqi died in the year 458 A.H. in Naisaboor and was buried in Baihaq.[2]

Other Points Derived from This Hadith

- Islam is a complete way of life. It contains correct beliefs, pure acts of worship, noble character and a remarkable code of law. It gives everyone his due rights. It protects the wealth, life and honor of the people. Since disputes and claims are a normal part of human life, Islam has enacted the proper and best means to bring an end to such disputes in a just manner. This hadith is one example of how the *shareeah* achieves such a lofty goal.
- Islam is also the "most practical religion," in the sense that it takes into consideration the real nature of mankind. It does not have laws that violate how mankind is created. At the same time, Islam does not expect all of its adherent to be like "little angels."[3] There will always be some evil in society, even in the best of societies. There may always be hypocrites and those of weak faith present. Therefore, the laws of Islam are also structured to take those elements of society into consideration. Part of the means by which the remainder of society can be protected from those elements are the laws and principles related to judicial proceedings, witnesses and so forth.
- A person is free of guilt or claims made against him until proven otherwise.
- No decision is to be made in favor of a claimant simply because he is from a higher class while the defendant is from a lower class. No matter how noble or righteous the plaintiff is, if he cannot offer any proof for his claim, the charges against the defendant will be dropped if he takes an oath that he is innocent of said charges.

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[1] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, pp. 243-244.

[2] Unless otherwise noted, the information above concerning al-Baihaqi came from Abdul Ghafaar al-Bindaawi's introduction to Ahmad al-Baihaqi, *Shuab al-Imaan* (Beirut: Daar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1990), vol. 1, pp. 13-18.

[3] Cf., Baitaar, p. 201.

- Any oath taken by a Muslim must be in the name of Allah only. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated,

  مَنْ كَانَ حَالِفًا فَلْيَحْلِفْ بِاللَّهِ أَوْ لِيَصْمُتْ

  "Whoever is to swear an oath must swear by Allah or remain silent." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)
- It is permissible for the judge to make the plaintiff swear that his witnesses are telling the truth. According to Imam Ahmad, this was done by Ali ibn Abu Taalib. Furthermore, the judge may also make the witnesses themselves swear that what they are stating is the truth. This is in order to remove any doubt from their testimony.[1]
- The judge may not decide a case based on his own knowledge of particular events. He is only allowed to decide a case based on what is presented in front of him. Al-Bukhari and Muslim record that the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated,

  إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ وَإِنَّكُمْ تَخْتَصِمُونَ إِلَيَّ وَلَعَلَّ بَعْضَكُمْ أَنْ يَكُونَ أَلْحَنَ بِحُجَّتِهِ مِنْ بَعْضٍ
  وَأَقْضِيَ لَهُ عَلَى نَحْوِ مَا أَسْمَعُ فَمَنْ قَضَيْتُ لَهُ مِنْ حَقِّ أَخِيهِ شَيْئًا فَلَا يَأْخُذْ فَإِنَّمَا أَقْطَعُ
  لَهُ قِطْعَةً مِنَ النَّارِ

  "I am a human being. You come to me as litigants. Perhaps, one of you is better in presenting his argument than the other and I decide in his favor according to what I have heard. If I have decided anything for someone from the rights of his brother, he should not take it for I have portioned for him a portion of the Hell-fire." The wisdom behind this is obvious. It is to prevent any kind of wrongdoing or harm on the part of the judge. He may, if such were permissible, claim to have some knowledge and decide in favor of anyone he wishes. Instead, he may only decide matters on the basis of the clear evidence presented in front of him. This also prevents the judge from being bribed to decide a case. It also frees the judge himself from suspicion as he may have decided a case based on his own knowledge of a matter while people may suspect that he did not really have such knowledge and was just doing injustice.[2]
- Acting as a judge between people is a very important job. It is through such people that rights are protected and many obligations are fulfilled. The reward for being a just and honest judge can be great. If a person sincerely tries to solve a case honestly and justly, he will be rewarded by Allah even

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[1] Cf., ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 237.

[2] Cf., al-Bugha and Mistu, pp. 249-250.

if he was not able to achieve the correct conclusion. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) stated,

إِذَا حَكَمَ الْحَاكِمُ فَاجْتَهَدَ ثُمَّ أَصَابَ فَلَهُ أَجْرَانِ وَإِذَا حَكَمَ فَاجْتَهَدَ ثُمَّ أَخْطَأَ فَلَهُ أَجْرٌ

"If a judge [or ruler] decided a case and strove [to determine the correct ruling], then if he were correct, he receives two rewards. And if he strove and was incorrect, he receives just one reward." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.) In the latter case, he received one reward for his striving although he was not able to come to the correct conclusion. However, the "judge" must be very careful in his decisions. He must do his best to base his decision on knowledge and not allow his emotions or desires to sway his judgment in any way. The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said,

الْقُضَاةُ ثَلاثَةٌ وَاحِدٌ فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَاثْنَانِ فِي النَّارِ فَأَمَّا الَّذِي فِي الْجَنَّةِ فَرَجُلٌ عَرَفَ الْحَقَّ فَقَضَى بِهِ وَرَجُلٌ عَرَفَ الْحَقَّ فَجَارَ فِي الْحُكْمِ فَهُوَ فِي النَّارِ وَرَجُلٌ قَضَى لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى جَهْلٍ فَهُوَ فِي النَّارِ

"Judges are of three categories: one in Paradise and two in the Hell-fire. As for the one in Paradise, it is a man who recognizes the truth and judges in accordance with it. As for the man who recognizes the truth but is unjust in his ruling, he is in the Hell-fire. And the man who judges among the people with ignorance, he is also in the Hell-fire."[1]

Summary of the Hadith

- Laws must be structured to prevent men from enforcing false claims against others. If the laws of evidence and procedure are not respected, people would start claiming everybody else's property and wealth.
- The burden of proof is upon the claimant. He is claiming something that goes against the apparent or obvious situation.
- If the claimant cannot provide any proof, the defendant may make an oath to clear himself of all charges or claims against him.
- Figure 33.1 is a graphical representation of the process that is described in this hadith.

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[1] Recorded by Abu Dawood, al-Tirmidhi and others. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 818.

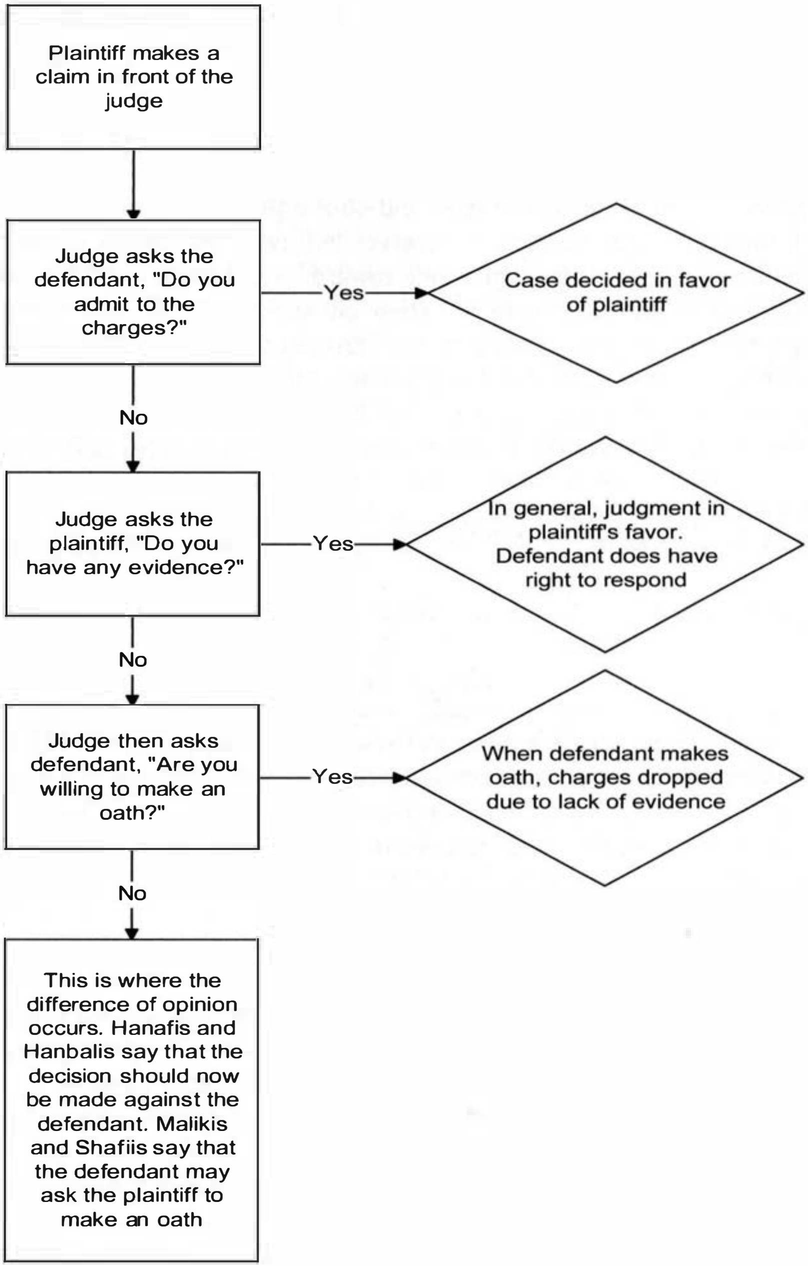
Plaintiff makes a claim in front of the judge
Judge asks the defendant, "Do you admit to the charges?"
Yes
Case decided in favor of plaintiff
No
Judge asks the plaintiff, "Do you have any evidence?"
Yes
In general, judgment in plaintiff's favor. Defendant does have right to respond
No
Judge then asks defendant, "Are you willing to make an oath?"
Yes
When defendant makes oath, charges dropped due to lack of evidence
No
This is where the difference of opinion occurs. Hanafis and Hanbalis say that the decision should now be made against the defendant. Malikis and Shafiis say that the defendant may ask the plaintiff to make an oath

Figure 33.1. Summary of Handling of Allegations Before a Judge

Hadith #34
"Whoever of You Sees an Evil..."

عَنْ أَبِيْ سَعِيْدٍ الخُدْرِيِّ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُوْلَ
اللهِ صَلَّى اللَّه عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ مَنْ رَأَى مِنْكُمْ مُنْكَرًا
فَلْيُغَيِّرْهُ بِيَدِهِ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِلِسَانِهِ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِقَلْبِهِ
وَذَلِكَ أَضْعَفُ الإِيمَانِ

رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ

On the authority of Abu Saeed al-Khudri (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) say, "Whoever of you sees an evil must then change it with his hand. If he is not able to do so, then [he must change it] with his tongue. And if he is not able to do so, then [he must change it] with his heart. And that is the slightest [effect of] faith."
Recorded by Muslim.

Selected Vocabulary

منكر	- "evil, wrong," see the discussion below
فليغيره	- "he must then change it"; the ف corresponds to, "then"; the ل implies an imperative; the ي is for the third person, male; غيّر means, "to change"; and the ه refers to "it," or, in this case, the evil that is being seen.
بيده	- "by his hand"; the ب is "by, with"; يد is hand; the ه is "his"
فإن	- "and if"
يستطع	- "he is able to"
فبلسانه	- "then by his tongue"; the ف is "then"; the ب again is, "by, with"; لسان is tongue; the ه is "his" again.
فبقلبه	- "then by his heart," قلب is heart.
أضعف	- "weakest"
الإيمان	- "the faith"

Takhreej

This hadith was recorded through the chain of Qais ibn Muslim from Taariq ibn Shihaab from Abu Saeed. With that chain, it was recorded by Muslim, Abu Dawood, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nasaai, ibn Maajah, Ahmad, ibn Hibbaan, al-Tayaalisi, Abdul Razzaaq, Abu Nuaim and others. The text of the hadith states that the governor Marwaan was the first one who gave the *khutbah* before the *Eid* Prayer. A person stood up to him and said, "The prayer is before the *khutbah*." Marwaan said, "We have left that practice." Abu Saeed then said, "That person [who had objected to the wrong act] has fulfilled the obligation upon him. I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) say, 'Whoever of you sees an evil must change it by his hand…'"

It was also recorded with the chain of Ismaeel ibn Rajaa from his father from Abu Saeed al-Khudri. With that chain, it was recorded by Muslim, Abu Dawood, ibn Maajah, Ahmad, al-Baihaqi, ibn Hibbaan, Abd ibn Humaid, ibn Mandah and others.

Al-Bukhari also records it with a different chain. However, in al-Bukhari's version and another report in *Muslim*, it was Abu Saeed al-Khudri who objected to Marwaan and pulled him by his hand. In that narration, the statement ("Whoever sees...") was not attributed to the Prophet (peace be upon him).[1] It is possible that both Abu Saeed and another man objected to Marwaan's action and different narrators narrated what they witnessed at the time.[2]

General Comments About the Hadith

This hadith touches upon one of the most important issues for the salvation and prosperity of the Muslim community. The overriding characteristic of eradicating evil is one of the characteristics that separates this Muslim community from the previous communities. In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has made it clear that removing evil or wanting to remove evil is an essential characteristic of the faith of a Muslim.

This hadith exemplifies a believer's attitude toward evil. A believer is never willing to accept or be pleased with evil. Whenever evil is in front of him, he will oppose it and do his best to remove it given his capability.

About the Narrator: Abu Saeed al-Khudri

Abu Saeed was discussed in the commentary to Hadith Number 32.

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[1] Cf., ibn Muhammad, pp. 196-197.

[2] For a lengthier explanation for what may have occurred, see al-Nawawi, *Sharh Saheeh*, vol. 2, p. 21. Qaadhi Iyaadh and ibn Hajr imply that it could have been two completely different incidents. However, al-Ubayy says that such is a far-fetched understanding. See Qaadhi Iyaadh al-Yahsubi, vol. 1, p. 294; al-Ubayy, vol. 1, p. 153; Ibn Hajr, *Fath* (Daar al-Ifta), vol. 2, p. 450.

"Whoever of you sees an evil"

In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) specifically mentioned the case where the person sees the evil that is being committed. If there is an open and clear evil that Muslims are witnessing, it is obligatory upon them to change it if they have the ability to do so.

However, many scholars understand this portion of the hadith to be a reference to knowledge instead of specifically seeing.[1] In other words, if one knows for certain that an evil is occurring, he must work to remove it. Even if he does not see the evil at that moment, it is sufficient that he has the knowledge that it is occurring. That knowledge requires that he remove that evil. It is also sufficient to be considered knowledge that trustworthy people inform him of that evil existing or that strong circumstantial evidence point to that evil's existence. If there are some clear signs pointing to the existence of some evil, he may follow up those clear signs.[2]

At the same time, though, it is not allowed to have unwarranted suspicions about others or to spy on others. If a person simply suspects, without any strong evidence, that some evil is occurring, it is not his right to pry into other's private affairs and uncover the matter.[3] The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

لا تَجَسَّسُوا

"Do not spy on one another." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

The Definition of *Munkar* ("Evil") and its Opposite *Maroof*

Munkar (منكر), in a general sense, is everything that is rejected or objectionable from a *shareeah* or rational point of view. However, its meaning in the expression, "ordering good and eradicating evil (*munkar*)," is that which is rejected or objected to by the *shareeah*. In other words, there may be some acts that the people do not consider good but, if the *shareeah* has allowed such acts, they may not be considered *munkar* and are not required to be removed.[4]

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[1] Cf., al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 244; al-Munaawi, vol. 6, p. 130; al-Qaari, vol. 9, p. 328; al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 262; al-Azhari, p. 71. Ibn Rajab (*Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 254) states, "If the [evil] is hidden and he does not see it, although he knows about it, then most of the narrations from Ahmad state that he does not present himself to the evil..." But then he mentions that other narrations from Ahmad show that if a person knows about an evil and where it is occurring, he is like one who has actually seen it.

[2] Cf., al-Bugha and Mistu, pp. 262-3.

[3] For more details on what is and is not considered spying, see Hamad al-Ammaar, *Haqeeqah al-Amr bi-l-Maroof wa al-Nahi an al-Munkar* (Riyadh: Daar Ishbeeliyah, 1997), pp. 145-154.

[4] Cf., Khaalid al-Sabt, *Al-Amr bi-l-Maroof wa al-Nahi an al-Munkar* (London: al-Muntada al-Islaami, 1995), p. 24.

It is important to note, as al-Sabt has done, that *munkar* is not equivalent to sin or acts of disobedience to Allah (*maasiyah*). *Munkar* is a more general term. A *munkar* is a *munkar* no matter who is performing it; even if the person performing the *munkar* is not sinful, because he is a minor or ignorant, for example, the act is still a *munkar* that must be removed. Therefore, if a small child, for example, is sipping out of a glass of beer, it is a *munkar* and it must be stopped. Therefore, in general, when it comes to *munkar*, one does not take into consideration the person performing the act but one simply looks at the act itself.[1]

Another important aspect that must be noted here is the issues in which there are differences of opinion among the scholars. Sometimes an act may be considered "sinful" or *munkar* although the one who performs it is not considered a sinner. For example, Imam Ahmad said that the one who drinks *nabeedh* (intoxicating fruit nectar) is to be flogged, although he is not considered an evildoer if he performs that act following the opinions of those scholars who say that it is permissible.[2] Therefore, again, the *munkar* must be stopped without any consideration of whether its doer is sinful or not.

Maroof (معروف) is the opposite of *munkar*. It is a word that implies every act of obedience to Allah and every act that takes one closer to Allah, whether it be obligatory or recommended. Its meaning also has the sense that they are the deeds that people accept and are pleased with and that people can have no objection to.[3]

Note that in this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) only mentioned the changing of evil. When an obligatory deed is not performed, that is also an evil. The only way to remove that evil is by the commanding or ordering of the performance of the obligatory deed. Hence, in a sense, this hadith of the Prophet also covers aspects of ordering good and not simply of eradicating evil.[4]

To Whom is This Command Addressed?

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Whoever of you…" This means that this command is directed to each and every Muslim. Everyone has the obligation to forbid evil if he has the means to do so.

However, there are some people who have special responsibilities to forbid evil. This is because they have more ability or power to remove it. They may be in a general position of power or they may be in a specific position of responsibility. In either case, their ability to remove evil is more than the ability of those who do not have that authority.

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[1] Al-Sabt, *al-Amr*, p. 134. Also see al-Mudaabaghi, p. 244.
[2] Cf., ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 255. Also see al-Mudaabaghi, p. 244.
[3] Al-Qaari, vol. 8, p. 327.
[4] Cf., al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 244.

Therefore, this address is first and foremost directed to the rulers and scholars.[1] They are the people of most authority. The rulers can enact laws and enforce punishments to keep people from committing evil. They have the authority to physically stop many evils and prevent them from occurring. It is obligatory upon them to remove evil "by their hands" or force because, in general, they have the means to do so. If the rulers do not fulfill this responsibility, they have betrayed their trust toward Allah and the Muslim masses. Even worse is the case where it is the rulers themselves who are encouraging or forcing the evil among the populous.

The scholars also have great authority, in that their voice is listened to and they have the knowledge of the *shareeah* to know what is right and what is wrong. Many times, they even have authority over the rulers. Often, if they speak out against an evil or act to remove an evil, no one, not even the ruler, can say anything to them because they have the respect and love of the people. Therefore, it is often obligatory upon the scholars to at least remove evil by their tongues because, many times, they have the means to do so.

It is for this reason that when these two groups, the rulers and scholars, go bad, the society as a whole goes bad, as many scholars in the past have stated.[2]

However, this address of the Prophet (peace be upon him) also extends to everyone who is in a position of authority, wherein he can remove an evil that exists. The director of a school, for example, often times has the power and influence to remove many evils from the school, such as mixing between the boys and girls and so forth. The boss of a company often has similar powers. The director or *ameer* of a mosque also has such powers. He will have, in most cases, the authority to remove disallowed pictures and unacceptable things from the premises of the mosque. When these people have the authority and power to do such acts, it becomes obligatory upon them to remove such evils when no one else is removing them or if others are not capable of removing them.[3]

Husbands, fathers and mothers are also in special positions of responsibility. Husbands are considered the head of the household. Therefore, it is upon their shoulders to make sure their families are headed in the right direction: toward Paradise and away from Hell. It is the responsibility of the husband to keep his wife from committing evil and to order her to do what is right. If he sees her, for example, talking on the phone and backbiting others, he has the right to tell her to stop or to take the phone from her and hang it up.

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[1] Cf., al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 264.

[2] Abdullah ibn al-Mubaarak, for example, wrote in lines of poetry,
"I have seen that sins bring death to the heart
and produce disgrace and its [sins'] addiction
Abandoning sins is the life of the hearts
and what is best for your self is to disobey it [the self]
And has the religion not but been destroyed by rulers
and monks and scholars who are evil."
Quoted in ibn al-Qayyim, *Al-Jawaab al-Kaafi*, p. 67.

[3] Cf., al-Baitaar, pp. 207-208.

Fathers and mothers also have special responsibilities toward their children. Mothers usually spend more time with their children, so this obligation is especially important upon them. As explained above, *munkar* or evil includes the wrong that children commit, even if they are considered sinless. Therefore, if a child is playing music, watching something objectionable or destroying somebody's property, the parent must step in and stop the child. If the parent sees what is happening and simply decides not to do anything, the parent is sinful because he or she saw an evil and did not do anything about it although he or she had the ability to stop it. This is part of the obligation that is referred to in this hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him): if one has the means to stop an evil, one must stop it.

Does This Command Extend to Evildoers?

Al-Qaari stated that the address in this hadith extends to "men, women, slaves, the impious or a boy who can distinguish [between right and wrong]."[1] This leads to a very important point: one does not have to be completely pious and free of sins in order to order good and forbid evil. Yes, it is true that the more pious a person is, the more he may be positively responded to when preaching to others. However, that does not mean that such is a requirement for ordering good and eradicating evil. An impious person who commits a great deal of sin has every right to, for example, take wine out of another person's hand and throw it down the drain, given the proper conditions.

Some people are confused on this issue because of a misunderstanding of specific verses of the Quran or hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him). For example, one verse quoted in this regard is:

أَتَأْمُرُونَ ٱلنَّاسَ بِٱلْبِرِّ وَتَنسَوْنَ أَنفُسَكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ تَتْلُونَ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ ۚ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ

"Do you enjoin righteousness upon mankind while you yourselves forget (to practice it)? And you are readers of the Scripture! Have you then no sense?" (*al-Baqara* 44). This verse is used as a proof that a sinner should not or has no right to ask others not to perform sins or to prevent them from doing so. Many times this verse is used by the person himself to explain why he does not involve himself in that responsibility. He says, "I cannot order good and forbid evil because I myself am not a good Muslim. When I become a good Muslim and stop committing sins, then I will order good, forbid evil and so on. This is according to Allah's command in the Quran..." and then the above verse will inevitably be recited.

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[1] Al-Qaari, vol. 9, p. 329.

This argument is further enhanced with reference to the following hadith of the Prophet (peace be on him): The Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) said,

يُجَاءُ بِرَجُلٍ فَيُطْرَحُ فِي النَّارِ فَيَطْحَنُ فِيهَا كَطَحْنِ الْحِمَارِ بِرَحَاهُ فَيُطِيفُ بِهِ أَهْلُ النَّارِ
فَيَقُولُونَ أَيْ فُلَانُ أَلَسْتَ كُنْتَ تَأْمُرُ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَى عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ فَيَقُولُ إِنِّي كُنْتُ
آمُرُ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَلَا أَفْعَلُهُ وَأَنْهَى عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأَفْعَلُهُ

"A man will be brought and thrown into hell and he will circumambulate in Hell like a donkey of a flour grinding mill. All the people of Hell will gather around him and will say to him, 'O so and so, didn't you order others to do good and forbid them from doing evil?' That man will say, 'I used to order others to do good but I myself never used to do it, and I used to forbid others from evil while I myself used to do evil.'" (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

The misconception related to this verse and hadith seems to stem from a lack of a complete understanding of the "*fiqh*" of "ordering good and eradicating evil".[1] From the Quran and hadith of the Prophet (peace be on him) it is clear that, with respect to ordering good and eradicating evil, every individual Muslim has the following four obligations:

(1) He must order himself to do good.
(2) He must prevent himself from doing evil.
(3) He must order others to do good.
(4) He must restrain others from doing evil.

These are four mutually independent obligations. They must not be confused or mixed with each other. If a Muslim is not fulfilling one of those four obligations, does that mean that he should compound his error by not performing one or all of the other three obligations? If someone is not being honest, he is failing with respect to the first obligation of ordering himself to do good (be honest). If he sees someone killing an innocent man, should he not do anything to stop him while saying to himself, "I am not a pious person because I am not honest so I have no right to stop that murderer"? Or if he sees somebody else lying (the same sin he commits), should he say to himself, "I also lie so I shouldn't say anything to him"? Perhaps the following example will make things most obvious. Suppose a man drinks alcohol. Suppose he then sees his son drinking alcohol. Doesn't he still have the obligation to advise his son and tell him not to drink, even though he himself drinks?

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[1] For an excellent discussion of this misconception, see Fadhl-Ilaahi, *Shubhaat Haul al-Amr bi-l-Maroof wa al-Nahi an al-Munkar* (Gujranwalah, Pakistan: Idaarah Tarjumaan al-Islaam, 1991), pp. 20-24. Also see al-Nawawi, *Sharh Saheeh*, vol. 2, p. 22.

If he does not do so, he will simply be compounding his sins. He neither stops himself from sins nor does he stop others from doing wrong. He is committing a mistake on top of another mistake.

What about the verse quoted above? Doesn't that verse condemn the person for keeping others from doing wrong while he himself does wrong? Yes, that is true. That is what the verse states. But what is the exact act that Allah is condemning the person for? Is Allah censuring the person for ordering others to do good? Is it conceivable that Allah would punish anyone for ordering good or stopping evil? Obviously, that is inconceivable. And that could not be the meaning of the above verse. That is not the act that Allah is condemning.

Allah is not blaming the person for ordering others to do good or for keeping them from evil (obligations 3 and 4 listed above). But what Allah is blaming the person for is that he himself is not performing the good deeds or keeping himself from evil (obligations 1 and 2 mentioned above).[1] These different obligations must not be confused as confusion in this matter could lead to disastrous results in both this life and in the Hereafter. Simply because someone may be failing in performing some of his obligations does not mean that he no longer has the obligation of guiding to the straight path or correcting others when they do wrong.

"then he must change it with his hand"

"Change it" means "remove it". Removing evil is a communal obligation. If a Muslim or a group of Muslims repels the evil, the rest are absolved from any responsibility. However, if none of them repel the evil, although it was within their ability to do so, they are all sinful. This is agreed upon by the scholars.[2]

This obligation can become an individual obligation, that is, it can become obligatory upon a specific person. For example, if a certain person is the only one who has knowledge of a certain evil or if he is the only one who has the ability to remove that evil, then it becomes obligatory upon him to act to remove that evil. If he does not do so, he, as an individual, will be sinful.

The means to removing it, however, depends on one's ability. It should be done by one's hand if possible. If not, then by one's tongue or speech. Then, finally the last option, by one's heart.

This hadith is particularly talking about "the changing of evil" and not "the forbidding of evil." This hadith is referring to the case where one is actually witnessing or aware of an evil that is currently happening. It is his obligation to put an end to that evil at that time. The "forbidding of evil" is a more general concept that also includes preventive measures to keep an evil for recurring. There is a difference between the two aspects and the approaches between the two are different. In the case of trying to forbid evil, one starts with speech and kindness. In the case of changing evil, one starts with one's hands and actions. Only if that is not possible does one move to the level of trying to change it by one's speech.[1]

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[1] See the commentaries on *al-Baqara* verse 44 in al-Qurtubi, vol. 1, p. 366; ibn Katheer, *Tafseer*, vol. 1, pp. 90-92; Abdul Rahmaan ibn Naasir al-Saadi, *Taiseer al-Kareem al-Rahmaan fi Tafseer Kalaam al-Mannaan* (Riyadh: Muassasat al-Saidiya, n.d.), vol. 1, p. 82.

[2] Al-Nawawi, *Sharh Saheeh*, vol. 2, p. 21.

What is meant by changing something by one's hand is to actually physically put a stop to the evil that is going on. It would include, for example, breaking containers of wine and throwing the wine out, breaking musical instruments, destroying statues, tearing up pictures, burning magazines and so forth.

There is no question that this is one of the most important means by which a person can bring an end to an evil or enforce what is right. The prophets (peace be upon them) followed this means in a number of different cases. Allah quotes the Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) as saying and doing,

وَتَٱللَّهِ لَأَكِيدَنَّ أَصْنَٰمَكُم بَعْدَ أَن تُوَلُّوا۟ مُدْبِرِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾ فَجَعَلَهُمْ جُذَٰذًا إِلَّا كَبِيرًا لَّهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ إِلَيْهِ يَرْجِعُونَ

"And, by Allah, I shall plot a plan to destroy your idols after you have gone away and turned your backs.' So he broke them into pieces, (all) except the biggest of them, so that they may turn to it" (*al-Anbiyaa* 57-58).

Moses is also quoted as saying,

وَٱنظُرْ إِلَىٰٓ إِلَٰهِكَ ٱلَّذِى ظَلْتَ عَلَيْهِ عَاكِفًا ۖ لَّنُحَرِّقَنَّهُۥ ثُمَّ لَنَنسِفَنَّهُۥ فِى ٱلْيَمِّ نَسْفًا

"And look at your god [idol] to which you have been devoted. We will certainly burn it and scatter its particles into the sea" (*Taha* 97).

Similarly, al-Bukhari records that when the Prophet (peace be upon him) entered the Kaaba, he destroyed all of the idols that were therein.

This approach has been approved by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in this hadith under discussion here. Furthermore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) sent Ali out on an expedition and told him not to leave any statue but to destroy it, nor any picture but to erase it or any raised grave but to level it. (Recorded by Muslim.)

This approach has also been explicitly approved by the scholars of the past. Ahmad was asked about a person who broke his mother's lute. He said he neither has to pay for it nor should he fix it. He was also asked about a group of people who were playing dice and were told to stop. When they did not stop, someone took their dice and destroyed them. Ahmad said that he had done well and he did not have to reimburse them for that. He said that if drums, tambourines or flutes are out in the open, they may be destroyed. He said even if such things are in the hands of children, they should be destroyed.[1]

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[1] Cf., ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 4, p. 490.

The reason that removing evil by one's hand should be the first approach resorted to is that it is the most effective means and the means with the greatest lasting affect. If a person is drinking alcohol, for example, he could be told that it is bad and he should stop. That might influence him for a minute, so he may put the alcohol down or back in the refrigerator or something of that nature. Then when the influence of the speech is over, he may go right back to the evil. But when someone physically destroys or removes the evil, that temptation or alternative is no longer available. The alcohol is no longer there for the taking. If he wants to go back to drinking, he will have to restart the process of purchasing new alcohol and so forth. The same is true for musical instruments, pornography, pictures and so on.

In addition, when one destroys the evil "instrument" itself, it does not allow others to come and use that instrument. Again, a person may be convinced not to play a musical instrument. Therefore, he puts the instrument down and decides never to play it again. However, his younger brother in the house, for example, may pick up the instrument and start using it. Hence, the entire potential of the evil instrument has not been removed. But when the instrument is physically destroyed, there is no fear that someone else may come along and also use it for evil.

The Conditions for Changing an Evil by One's Hands

A person may, for example, destroy an article which is an evil as long as he adheres to the principles or conditions related to it. These conditions include the following:[2]

(1) Like all such noble deeds, the person must change the evil solely for the sake of Allah. He should not be simply responding to what someone else had done to him or have the intention of harming or ridiculing someone else.

(2) He must follow the *shareeah* principles when changing an evil in the sense that he cannot remove one evil by bringing about a greater evil. First he must study the situation to ascertain whether or not his actions will lead to greater harm. If he feels that the only way he can stop a particular evil is by

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[1] Cf., Abdul Azeez al-Masood, *Darajaat Taghyeer al-Munkar* (Riyadh: Daar al-Watn, 1993), pp. 20-21. This topic is also discussed in great detail, with numerous quotes from early scholars, in Abdul Rahmaan al-Saalihi, *al-Kanz al-Akbar fi al-Amr bi-l-Maroof wa al-Nahi an al-Munkar* (Makkah: Maktabah Nazaar Mustafa al-Baaz, 1997), vol. 1, pp. 250-273.

[2] Cf., al-Masood, p. 24.

doing something that will lead to greater harm, then he is not allowed to stop that evil.

(3) He must make sure that the evil is, in fact, present and is, in reality, an evil that deserves to be removed or stopped. It should not be merely a case of suspicion or unfounded accusations.

(4) He must not go beyond what is permissible for him in the *shareeah.* He must stop at what is necessary to stop that evil. For example, if a person is playing a cassette tape with music on it, he may remove the tape and destroy it and he is not entitled to go further and destroy the cassette player if it can also be used for good purposes.

(5) He should personally remove the evil if he has the ability or right to do so. If not, he should assist someone who is capable of removing it.

"If he is not able to do so"

The command to change an evil by one's hand is conditioned by one having the ability to do so. If one is not able to do so, then he does not try to change the evil by his hand but he moves to the next level of changing the evil by his tongue. It is, therefore, important to understand what is meant by inability to change an evil.

Capability to change a wrong is of two types. One is a "spiritual," non-physical capability and the other is a "physical" capability.[1] The non-physical capability is in reference to knowledge and is discussed in more detail below.

The second type of capability is a "physical capability." In order for one to be obligated to remove an evil, he must have the physical means necessary to do so. A blind person, for example, may not have the same obligations as others because of his limitation, which would imply his inability to make sure that he can forbid evil in a safe manner. A weak person who would not be able to defend himself or ward off evil would not be required to remove the same evil that a stronger person may be required to do.

In order to make these aspects clear, they shall be discussed as eight different cases or scenarios. They are also drawn in Figures 34.1a and 34.1b.

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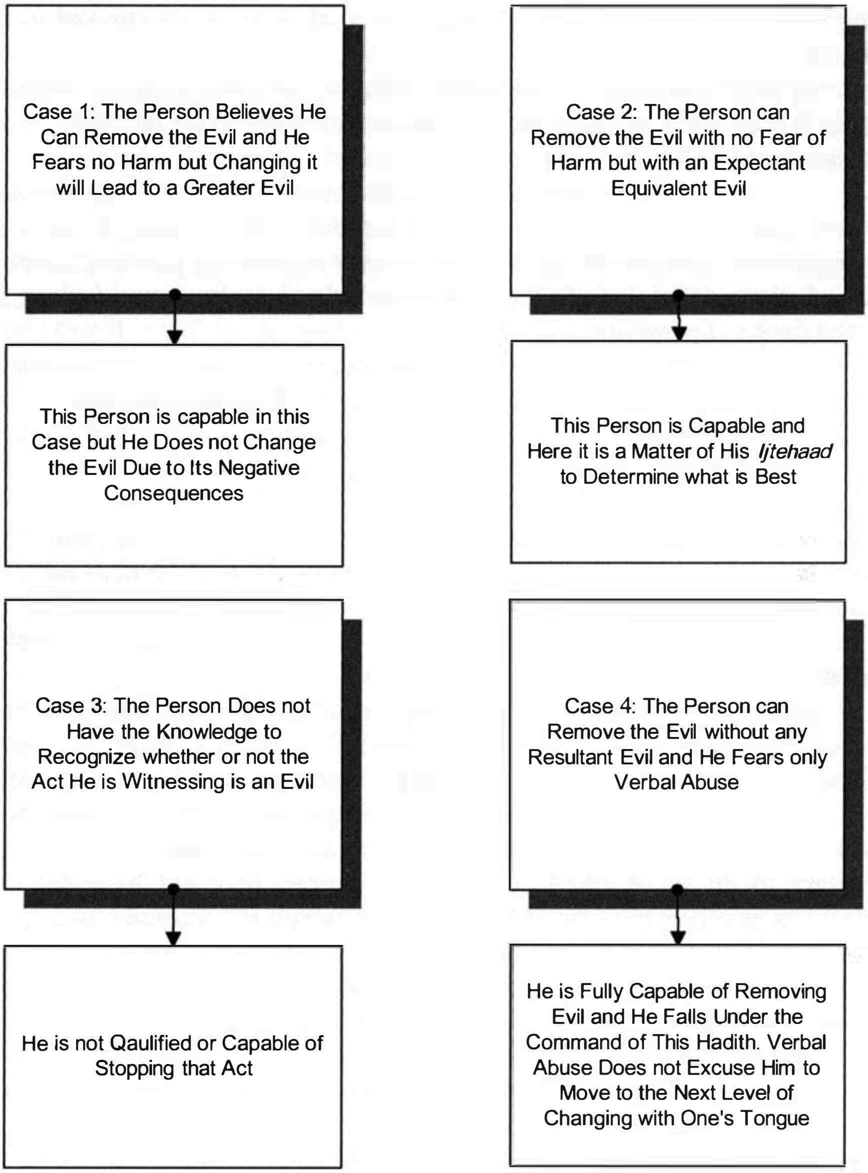
[1] Cf., al-Masood, pp. 7-9.



Case 1: The Person Believes He Can Remove the Evil and He Fears no Harm but Changing it will Lead to a Greater Evil

This Person is capable in this Case but He Does not Change the Evil Due to Its Negative Consequences

Case 2: The Person can Remove the Evil with no Fear of Harm but with an Expectant Equivalent Evil

This Person is Capable and Here it is a Matter of His *Ijtehaad* to Determine what is Best

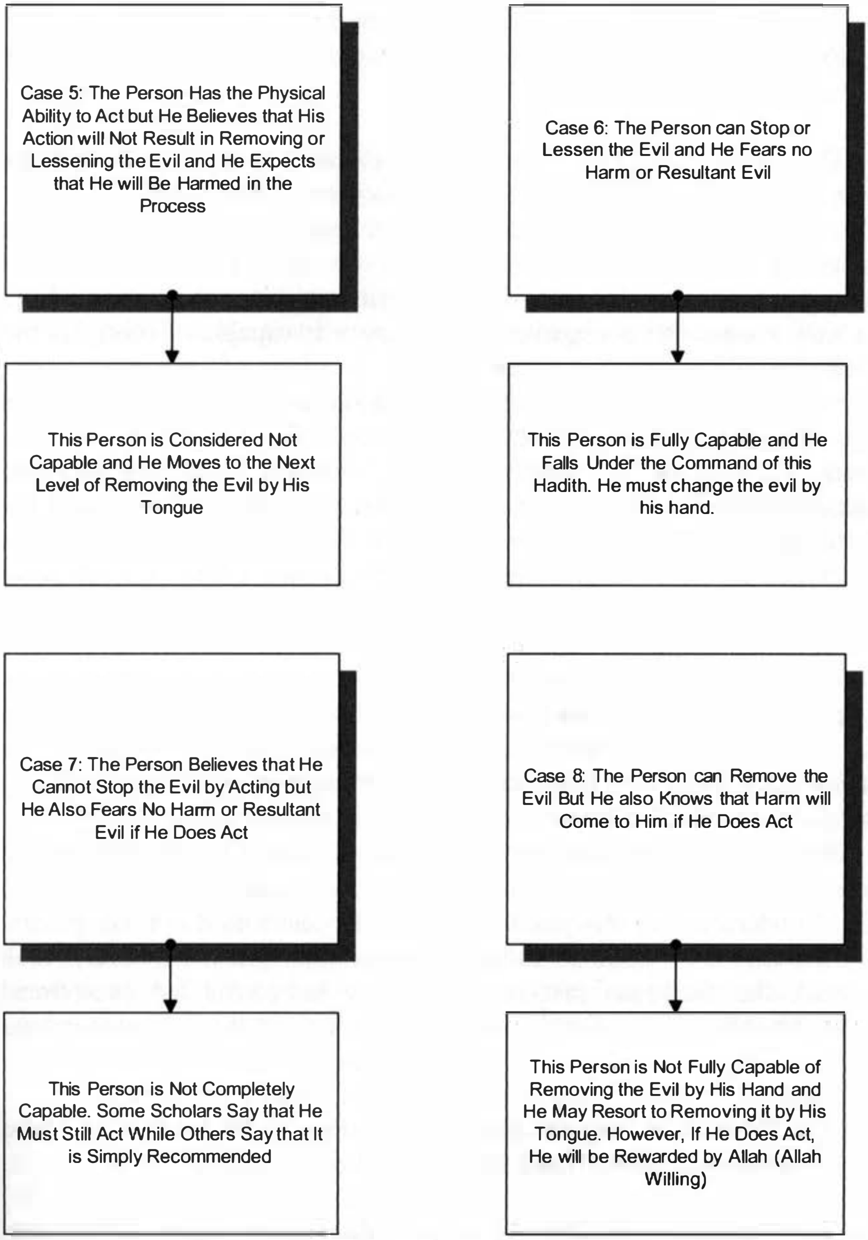
Case 3: The Person Does not Have the Knowledge to Recognize whether or not the Act He is Witnessing is an Evil

He is not Qaulified or Capable of Stopping that Act

Case 4: The Person can Remove the Evil without any Resultant Evil and He Fears only Verbal Abuse

He is Fully Capable of Removing Evil and He Falls Under the Command of This Hadith. Verbal Abuse Does not Excuse Him to Move to the Next Level of Changing with One's Tongue

Figure 34.1a. The Cases Concerning Removing Evil with One's Hand



Case 5: The Person Has the Physical Ability to Act but He Believes that His Action will Not Result in Removing or Lessening the Evil and He Expects that He will Be Harmed in the Process

This Person is Considered Not Capable and He Moves to the Next Level of Removing the Evil by His Tongue

Case 6: The Person can Stop or Lessen the Evil and He Fears no Harm or Resultant Evil

This Person is Fully Capable and He Falls Under the Command of this Hadith. He must change the evil by his hand.

Case 7: The Person Believes that He Cannot Stop the Evil by Acting but He Also Fears No Harm or Resultant Evil if He Does Act

This Person is Not Completely Capable. Some Scholars Say that He Must Still Act While Others Say that It is Simply Recommended

Case 8: The Person can Remove the Evil But He also Knows that Harm will Come to Him if He Does Act

This Person is Not Fully Capable of Removing the Evil by His Hand and He May Resort to Removing it by His Tongue. However, If He Does Act, He will be Rewarded by Allah (Allah Willing)

Figure 34.1.b. The Cases Concerning Removing Evil with One’s Hand (continued)

Case 1: The Person Believes He Can Change the Evil with His Hand and He Fears No Harm for Himself but Changing the Evil will Lead to Greater Evil

This was mentioned above while discussing the conditions for changing an evil. However, it deserves to be discussed in more detail.

In this case, the person is capable of changing the evil. However, the purpose of changing an evil is to put an end to something that is evil. It would defeat its own purpose if the changing of an evil would lead to an even greater evil. In such a case, therefore, even if the person is capable of changing the evil, he does not do so.

It is reported that ibn Taimiya was with some of his companions when they saw a group of Mongols drinking alcohol. Ibn Taimiya's associates suggested that they go and stop the people from drinking. Ibn Taimiya, however, advised them not to do so. He told them that alcohol has been prohibited because it keeps people from remembering Allah and from the prayers. But in their case, their drinking keeps them from killing people, taking slaves and taking people's wealth. Hence, it is better to leave them alone in their lesser crime.[1]

Ibn al-Qayyim stated that if a person saw impious and wicked people playing dice, it would not be wise to stop from doing so unless the person takes them to an act which is more beloved to Allah than the act they were performing. Otherwise, it is better to leave them alone as the current evil they are performing is much less than what they usually do.[2]

This aspect of knowing when to stop an evil and when to allow an evil to continue takes a great deal of insight and understanding. Not everyone is capable of understanding this point. For example, one would not risk general harm in the case of a personal infraction by an individual. However, Allah knows best, the situations just described may be considered exceptional circumstances. Most cases of evil can be stopped without it resulting in greater evil.

Case 2: The Person Can Stop the Evil with His Hand with No Fear of Harm but Believing that it Would Result in an Equivalent Evil

Once again, in this case, the person is considered capable. However, the overall purpose of his act, the lessening or removing of evil, will not be met because of the corresponding negative result he is expecting. Ibn al-Qayyim calls this category an area of juristic *ijtihaad*,[3] where the person will have to make a decision according to what he feels would be best.

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[1] This incident was reported by ibn al-Qayyim, *Ilaam al-Muwaqieen* (Daar al-Jeel), vol. 3, p. 5.

[2] Ibn al-Qayyim, *Ilaam* (Daar al-Jeel), vol. 3, p. 5.

[3] Ibn al-Qayyim, *Ilaam* (Daar al-Jeel), vol. 3, p. 4.

Allah knows best, but this also seems to be something of an exceptional case. In most cases, the expected outcome should be either lesser evil or greater evil.

Case 3: The Person Does Not Have the Knowledge to Recognize What is Truly an Evil

The first type of capability, called the "non-physical" capability, refers to knowledge. In other words, in order for one to forbid an evil he must first have the knowledge that the act is an evil. Similarly, the person must have the knowledge that the act he is commanding is truly a good deed. Many times people try to remove acts, thinking that they are an evil, while, in fact, they are from the sunnah. On the other hand, some people try to command people to do some deed which they think is a good deed while, in reality, it is an innovation. Hence, knowledge is an essential requirement for the one who wishes to order good and forbid evil. If a person does not possess such knowledge, he is not considered capable or responsible for removing the evil that he sees.

As al-Nawawi and al-Ghazzaali both pointed out, there are some acts that every Muslim knows for certain as either obligatory or forbidden acts, such as the rulings concerning prayer, fasting, drinking alcohol, illegal sexual intercourse and so forth. Concerning these matters, every Muslim may forbid evil or enforce good. However, the detailed matters, for example, the ruling concerning specific types of business transactions, must be left for the scholars and knowledgeable people. A layman may not understand exactly what is right or wrong concerning such an issue and, therefore, he is not required to order what is right or wrong in that case. Anything that requires profound knowledge or *ijtihaad* is not for the laymen to order or forbid.[1]

Many times people consider a different *ijtihaad* as an evil that they must remove. On the other hand, some people accept all differences of opinion and do not feel that anyone has the right to oppose any *ijtihaad* from anyone. Both of these extremes are incorrect.

There is a famous statement which says, "There is no eradicating of evil in matters of *ijtihaad*." What this means is that if a scholar or knowledgeable person comes to one conclusion, it is not the right of the others who follow a different conclusion to force him to follow their conclusion. In such a case, what he is following is not considered an evil but simply a different fiqh opinion.

This principle is conditioned by certain restrictions. The most important aspect is that the difference of opinion must be one where there is sound evidence for each opinion. In other words, there are some differences of opinion that are not respected. This is because one of the opinions is not founded on any type of sound or strong evidence. For example, *mutah* marriage ("temporary marriage") is something that is clearly forbidden in the hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Although some Muslims may claim that it is permissible, no weight is given to their opinion in the face of the strong evidence against them. For that reason, if a person has a *mutah* marriage, he is to be punished like a fornicator. The fact that he is following a specific opinion of some people will not be considered in this case because, in reality, there is no strong basis for that opinion and it goes against the Quran and sunnah.[1]

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[1] Muhammad al-Zabeedi, *Itihaaf al-Saadat al-Mutaqeen bi-Sharh Ihyaa Uloom al-Deen* (Beirut: Daar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1989), vol. 8, p. 75; Al-Nawawi, *Sharh Saheeh*, vol. 1, p. 51.

When there is a difference of opinion in which each side has some weighty evidence, then a person cannot oppose someone because he is following a different opinion. In this case, it is not a matter of ordering good and eradicating evil, as such. Instead, the one who believes that he is following the stronger opinion should advise and guide his fellow Muslim to what he believes is the truth. However, he must do so in a proper and respectful manner and should not be overly biased toward the opinion or scholar that he is following.

Case 4: The Person can Remove the Evil without any Resultant Evil and the Only Harm that He Fears is Verbal Abuse

Different people have different abilities to withstand different pressures or difficulties. This must be taken into consideration when discussing ordering good and eradicating evil. Al-Masood wrote,

> There is no doubt that the exact requirement of "ability" is not one exact measure. People are different. One person may be able to do things that another cannot. Allah may have given one ability in knowledge and body while another is lacking in one or both of those characteristics. The real principle is that the matter is left to the person's own conscience. However, at the same time, there must be some lower limit that everyone must be able to fulfill in order for this not to become a basis by which people abandon ordering good or eradicating evil. There must be some matters that are unacceptable as excuses for not ordering good or eradicating evil. For example, fear of blame, verbal abuse, cursing and so forth [are not valid excuses]. They cannot be used as excuses by anyone because they are all very minor and should be borne for the sake of Allah. Allah has praised those who strive in his path and do not fear the blame of those who blame others.[2]

Ibn Abdul Barr, al-Qurtubi and al-Ghazzaali all made the same point: the fear of verbal abuse or blame without physical harm is not sufficient as an excuse to keep one from ordering good and eradicating evil.[1] In fact, when the Prophet (peace be upon him) took the oath of allegiance from some of his Companions, part of what they pledged was, "to speak the truth wherever we are and, for the sake of Allah, not to fear the reproach of anyone who reproaches." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

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[1] Cf., ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 254-255; al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 263.

[2] Al-Masood, p. 13.

Case 5: The Person Has the Physical Ability to Act But He Believes He will not be Able to Remove the Evil and He Expects He will be Harmed if He Tries to Do So

In this case, the believer has good reason to believe that his action is not going to be of any benefit. At the same time, he knows that he will be beaten, for example, if he acts. For example, if a Muslim went into a bar in a Western country and started to smash the alcoholic beverages in the bar, the result would most likely be his being restrained by the bouncer, arrested by the police, fined and so forth. At the same time, he probably would not have actually stopped anyone from drinking.

Under these circumstances, his attempting to remove the evil is not obligatory. In fact, it can even become forbidden for him if the result will simply be harmful. This is exactly the case of the person who does not have the capability to change the evil by his hand. Hence, he must move to the next level of attempting to change the evil by his tongue.

Case 6: The Person Can Stop or Lessen the Evil and He Fears No Harm or Resultant Evil

A person knows that the evil will be stopped by his action. At the same time, no hardship is going to come to him. In this case, it is obligatory upon him to remove the evil. This is the general or absolute case of "having ability".

Case 7: The Person Believes that He is Not Going to Be Able to Stop or Lessen the Evil and He Also Fears No Harm if He does Act to Stop the Evil

A person knows that his action is not going to be of any benefit. At the same time, he does not fear that any harm would come to him if he does speak or act. In this case, al-Ghazzaali says, it is not obligatory upon him to speak or act because it is void of any true benefit. However, according to al-Ghazzaali, it is still preferred for him to speak or act in order to show the teachings of Islam and to remind the people of their religion.

On this point, al-Ghazzaali's view may not be the strongest opinion. Al-Nawawi clearly disagrees with him. Even in such a case, there is evidence to show that one must still speak against the evil. By doing so, one is conveying the message. This is what is obligatory upon the person. Even if the message is not listened to, he should convey it.[1] Ibn Rajab says that the strongest opinion and the opinion of the majority of the scholars is that it is still obligatory to attempt to remove that evil under such circumstances.[2]

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[1] Al-Qurtubi, *Jaami*, vol. 4, p. 47; al-Zabeedi, vol. 8, p. 56.

Furthermore, by doing so, the person has made himself "blameless" in front of Allah on the Day of Resurrection. In reference to those Jews who violated the laws of the Sabbath, Allah refers to three groups of people: those who were committing the wrong act, those who insisted on speaking to them about their wrong act and those who remained silent. Allah describes the situation of the latter two groups with the words,

وَإِذْ قَالَتْ أُمَّةٌ مِّنْهُمْ لِمَ تَعِظُونَ قَوْمًا ٱللَّهُ مُهْلِكُهُمْ أَوْ مُعَذِّبُهُمْ عَذَابًا
شَدِيدًا قَالُوا۟ مَعْذِرَةً إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ

"And when a community among them said, 'Why do you preach to a people whom Allah is about to destroy or punish with a severe torment?' [The preachers] said, 'In order to be free from guilt before your Lord and perhaps that they might fear [Allah]'" (*al-Araaf* 164).

Al-Bugha and Mistu state that this is a clear refutation of those people who try to keep others from preaching for what is good. They tell them, "Why do you tire yourself and waste your time with such people?" The answer is, "We are ordered to convey and if we are not listened to, that is not our fault or responsibility. We have fulfilled our obligation to Allah."

Al-Bugha and Mistu also point out that those who oppose such preaching sometimes refer to the verse in which Allah has clearly stated,

إِنَّكَ لَا تَهْدِى مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ وَلَٰكِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَهْدِى مَن يَشَآءُ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ
بِٱلْمُهْتَدِينَ

"Verily, you guide not whom you like but it is Allah who guides whom He wills. And He knows best those who are the guided" (*al-Qasas* 56). However, these people have forgotten that this verse was revealed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) with respect to Abu Taalib. The Prophet (peace be upon him) continued to call Abu Taalib to Islam and never stopped doing so, until the last moments of Abu Taalib's life, while Abu Taalib was on his deathbed.[3] That is, it was a case where the Prophet (peace be upon him) personally tired himself endlessly to try to convince his uncle to embrace Islam. Hence, that verse is actually an argument against what they are claiming.

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[1] Cf., al-Nawawi, *Sharh Saheeh*, vol. 2, p. 22.

[2] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 251.

[3] Al-Bugha and Mistu, pp. 258-259.

Case 8: The Person Believes He can Remove or Lessen the Evil But He Knows that Harm will Come to Him

A person knows that some harm is going to come to him yet, at the same time, he knows that he will be able to repel the evil. For example, he has the ability to break a person's wine casket and spill his wine and he is certain that the person will punish him harshly for that, perhaps even take his life. In this case, the eradicating of evil is neither obligatory or forbidden. It is, though, recommended.[1]

Al-Masood also makes the point that not ordering good or eradicating evil due to fear of harm is a special exemption from the *shareeah*. However, it is better and more pleasing in the sight of Allah for a person to risk his life and wealth in order to make the law of Allah supreme. A strong believer is willing to act on the truth for the sake of Allah no matter what the consequences. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated in a hadith,

أَلَا لا يَمْنَعَنَّ رَجُلاً مَهَابَةُ النَّاسِ أَنْ يَتَكَلَّمَ بِالْحَقِّ إِذَا عَلِمَهُ أَلَا إِنَّ أَفْضَلَ الْجِهَادِ كَلِمَةُ
حَقٍّ عِنْدَ سُلْطَانٍ جَائِرٍ

"Certainly, a person should not allow the veneration of the people to keep him from speaking the truth when he knows it. Verily, the best jihad is the statement of truth in the presence of an unjust ruler."[2] This hadith and others show that a person is rewarded by Allah even if his statement of truth should lead to his death or punishment.[3] Another hadith very similar to the above states,

أَلَا لَا يَمْنَعَنَّ أَحَدَكُمْ رَهْبَةُ النَّاسِ أَنْ يَقُولَ بِحَقٍّ إِذَا رَآهُ أَوْ شَهِدَهُ فَإِنَّهُ لَا يُقَرِّبُ مِنْ
أَجَلٍ وَلَا يُبَاعِدُ مِنْ رِزْقٍ أَنْ يَقُولَ بِحَقٍّ أَوْ يُذَكِّرَ بِعَظِيمٍ

"Verily, a person should not allow the veneration of the people to keep him from speaking the truth when he sees it or witnesses it. Certainly, to speak the truth or to remind of a great matter does not take one any closer to his appointed time nor does it keep one further from any provisions [already decreed for him]."[4]

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[1] Al-Ghazzaali's discussion may be found in the commentary to his *Ihyaa Uloom al-Deen*: al-Zabeedi, vol. 8, pp. 51-52.

[2] Recorded by Ahmad. It seems to be *hasan* based on other acceptable hadith, such as the next hadith mentioned in the text, which support its various parts.

[3] Al-Masood, pp. 14-15.

[4] Recorded by Ahmad, al-Tirmidhi and ibn Maajah. According to al-Hilaali (*Eeqaadh*, p. 458), it is *sahih*.

In fact, al-Masood argues that the ordering of good and the eradicating of evil can be obligatory upon a person even if it may surely lead to his death. This is the case where the guidance of a large number of people is dependent upon his speaking of the truth. In that case, he must speak the truth. The evidence for that is the lengthy hadith recorded by Muslim concerning the young boy and the king, the incident which *Surah al-Burooj* is in reference to. In that incident, the boy openly spoke the truth although he knew the king would punish him with death for doing so. However, he had to do that for if he remained silent or hid the truth, his people would not have been exposed to the truth at all.[1]

Under all circumstances, though, the person who wants to forbid evil or order good should have the fear of Allah only in his heart. He should not fear the people. If he starts to fear the people, and forgets that everything is by the will of Allah and forgets that if he acts for Allah's sake, Allah will protect him, then he will become very hesitant in his eradicating of evil. Indeed, he may even give it up completely. By fearing the people, he is, in reality, just belittling himself. They are just humans like himself. They have no real power over him. The only real power is with Allah.

If great harm does come to him due to his efforts of standing up for the sake of Allah, that harm will be a source of reward for him and of Allah's pleasure in the Hereafter. Al-Haakim records that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

سَيِّدُ الشُّهَدَاءِ حَمْزَةُ بْنُ عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ وَرَجُلٌ قَالَ إِلَى إِمَامٍ جَائِرٍ فَأَمَرَهُ
وَنَهَاهُ فَقَتَلَهُ

"The leader of the martyrs is Hamzah ibn Abdul Mutallib and a man who stood up to an unjust ruler and ordered him or prevented him and he [the ruler] therefore killed him."[2]

"then [he must change it] with his tongue"

One of the most important means of changing an evil is changing it with one's tongue. If one has the ability and right to change something by one's hand, he should do so. However, if one does not have such a capability, he should move to the next step. The next step is to use one's speech to influence the doers of evil to stop their evil.

This category, first and foremost, includes screaming for help, calling for the authorities and other emergency-type acts of the tongue that may lead to the end of an act of evil.[1] For example, if a believer sees a strong man robbing a weak person. He may conclude that he himself is not strong enough to ward off that robber. However, if he screams for help and begins to draw a crowd, the scream itself may ward off that robber and make him flee. When that happens, he has removed the evil by his tongue.

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[1] Al-Masood, pp. 16-17.

[2] Recorded by al-Haakim. Al-Bazzaar has something similar. According to al-Albaani, it is *hasan*. See al-Albaani, *Silsilat al-Ahadeeth al-Sahiha*, vol. 1, pp. 103-105.

The Steps of Eradicating Evil by One's Speech

If the above direct method of stopping evil by one's tongue is not possible, one then resorts to other methods of changing evil by one's tongue. According to al-Masood, there are certain steps that one should follow in eradicating evil by one's speech.[2] This is because the overall goal is to change and rectify one's behavior. One is not trying to harm or injure others. Therefore, the following approach is recommended:

First, one should make the person realize that he is committing an evil. This, depending on the situation, may be done directly or indirectly. The sinner may be told, "Someone like you should not perform such an evil deed that is displeasing to Allah." The person should continue to try to persuade the sinner kindly until he accepts his advice. Many times the sinner is not aware that he is committing a sin or he may not be aware of the gravity of the sin. Hence, by first informing the person of the matter, he may immediately and directly give up the act that he is doing. And that, obviously, is the goal. If this approach is effective, there is no need to move on to any other approach.

Al-Ghazzaali points out that it is important not to state that the person is ignorant. If the person is called ignorant or foolish, this will harm him and may drive him, due to his emotions, to defend his act and not change. One should approach him kindly without trying to harm him.[3]

In fact, if the Prophet (peace be upon him) knew that a person was committing some act that was unbecoming of him, he would speak publicly about the matter but in a general, indirect way, so that the person's feelings would not be hurt. Many times, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) would state, "Why do a people do such and such..."

If the above proves ineffective, the second step should be followed. This is where the person is warned and advised about his action. He is reminded of Allah and made to fear Allah due to the action that he is committing. The person should be reminded of his coming death and how awful it would be if he were to die while committing such an evil act. The person should also be reminded that he is being counseled out of the brotherly love and care that all Muslims should have for each other. In this way, he will be more likely to listen to the words of advice.

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[1] Cf., al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 245.
[2] Cf., al-Masood, pp. 25-32.
[3] Al-Zabeedi, vol. 8, p. 87.

In general, this approach is taken with respect to those people who are well aware of the *shareeah* ruling concerning the act they are performing. It is based on the Quranic verse,

ٱدْعُ إِلَىٰ سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِٱلْحِكْمَةِ وَٱلْمَوْعِظَةِ ٱلْحَسَنَةِ

"Invite unto the way of your Lord with *hikmah* [the arguments of the Quran and sunnah] and beautiful admonition" (*al-Nahl* 125). Hence, the person should quote Quranic verses and hadith to the person concerning the act that he is performing. He should also encourage him to repent and ask Allah for forgiveness for his deed.

Note that if the person is committing a sin in private, then this exhortation and advice should be done privately between the advisor and the sinner. If the advice is given publicly, it will simply expose the person and drive him to defend himself. He may feel that the advisor is simply seeking to make him look bad and hurt his reputation. Therefore, the admonition may not be taken in the manner in which it was meant.

If the above approaches are not effective, one moves to the next level of harsh speech. However, before moving on to harsher actions, one must truly size up the situation. One must be certain that his new actions will not lead to more harm. One must also be certain that he is not taking a harsher approach simply for his own benefit. For example, a person may have dealt kindly with another and he did not like the way the other person responded. For example, he may feel that the brother he had counseled did not give him the amount of respect that he believes he deserves. Therefore, based on that other person's reaction, he starts dealing with him in a harsher fashion. In this case, he is just acting on his own behalf and not truly for the sake of Allah.

It is true that the general rule is one of kindness and polite speech. Even when Allah directed Moses and Aaron to go the great tyrant Pharaoh, He stated,

ٱذْهَبَآ إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُۥ طَغَىٰ ﴿٤٣﴾ فَقُولَا لَهُۥ قَوْلًا لَّيِّنًا لَّعَلَّهُۥ يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَخْشَىٰ

"Go both of you to Pharaoh, verily, he has transgressed. And speak to him mildly, perhaps he may accept admonition or fear [Allah]" (*Taha* 43-44). Some people, though, seem to think that polite speech is the only way. However, this is not the case.

For some people, kindness and polite admonition have no effect whatsoever. They will only be moved or affected if they are dealt with in a harsh and hard manner. The sinner should be told something of the nature of, "Be aware of Allah. Don't you have any fear of Allah? Aren't you ashamed to be performing such a sin," and so forth or harsher words. However, the advisor must refrain from cursing the person or using words that are deemed inappropriate by the *shareeah.*

Fadhl-Ilaahi discusses the following cases where harshness is to be employed instead of polite and kind speech:[1]

(i) When crimes "against Allah"[2] and the sins requiring the prescribed punishments are committed, one must take a harsh stance until the situation is rectified or the criminal is punished. For example, in the verses related to punishing the fornicator, Allah makes it clear that pity or kindness cannot be invoked in order to prevent punishing such criminals. Allah states,

ٱلزَّانِيَةُ وَٱلزَّانِى فَٱجْلِدُوا۟ كُلَّ وَٰحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا مِا۟ئَةَ جَلْدَةٍ ۖ وَلَا تَأْخُذْكُم بِهِمَا
رَأْفَةٌ فِى دِينِ ٱللَّهِ إِن كُنتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلْيَوْمِ ٱلْءَاخِرِ ۖ

"[As for] the woman and the man guilty of fornication, flog each of them a hundred stripes. Let not pity withhold you in their case, in a prescribed punishment of Allah, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day" (*al-Noor* 2).

On this point, ibn Taimiya wrote that Satan has misled many people in this area. Satan has convinced many people to accept other's sins in the name of love and mercy that fill a person's heart and emotions. For this reason, many of them lose their sense of honor and jealousy for the sake of Allah. They think that by not being harsh upon such sins, they are being merciful to mankind and dealing with them politely. Actually, this is nothing but compromising one's religion as well as lack of faith and conviction. That is the real reason why they do not stop the evil that is present in their friends or associates around them.[3]

(ii) When opposition or ridicule of the call to Islam or what is right appears, one may have to take a harsher approach. In the face of such opposition and arrogance, kindness and politeness may have no effect. One can find examples of this nature among the prophets (peace be upon them) themselves. For example, Abraham said to his people,

قَالَ أَفَتَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ مَا لَا يَنفَعُكُمْ شَيْـًٔا وَلَا يَضُرُّكُمْ ﴿٦٦﴾
أُفٍّ لَّكُمْ وَلِمَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ ۖ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ

"[Abraham] said, 'Do you then worship besides Allah things that can neither profit you nor harm you? Fie upon you, and upon that which you worship besides Allah. Have you then no sense?'" (*al-Anbiyaa* 66-67).

In another verse, Allah says,

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[1] See Fadhl-Ilaahi, *Min Sifaat al-Daiyah: Al-Leen wa al-Rifq* (Pakistan: Idaarah Tarjumah al-Sunnah, 1991), pp. 34-61.

[2] These are the sins that affect society as a whole and, in particular, concerning which there are prescribed punishments.

[3] Cf., Ahmad ibn Taimiya in Muhammad al-Julainad, *Daqaaiq al-Tafseer al-Jaami li-Tafseer al-Imaam ibn Taimiya* (Daar al-Ansaar) vol. 4, p. 71.

وَلَا تُجَـٰدِلُوٓاْ أَهۡلَ ٱلۡكِتَـٰبِ إِلَّا بِٱلَّتِى هِىَ أَحۡسَنُ إِلَّا ٱلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُواْ مِنۡهُمۡ

"And argue not with the people of the Scripture unless it be in a way that is better— save for those of them who do wrong" (*al-Ankaboot* 46). Fadhl-Ilaahi gives the explanation of this verse by saying that, in general, their harshness should be answered with kindness, their anger with calmness. However, those among them who go beyond the limits and are not willing to listen but are only attacking or insulting, such are exempted from this approach. For them, one may use harsh words and toughness.[1]

It is concerning people of this nature— those who oppose the truth and openly ridicule what is correct— that Allah revealed the verse,

يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّبِىُّ جَـٰهِدِ ٱلۡكُفَّارَ وَٱلۡمُنَـٰفِقِينَ وَٱغۡلُظۡ عَلَيۡهِمۡ

"O Prophet, strive hard against the disbelievers and the hypocrites, and be harsh against them" (*al-Tauba* 73).

The Prophet (peace be upon him) made a supplication against a person who, simply out of pride, refused to listen to the Prophet's (peace be upon him) order. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told a man to eat with his right hand and he claimed that he was not able to. The Prophet (peace be upon him) explained that it was just pride and arrogance that kept that man from following the Prophet's command. Therefore, he supplicated that the man would not be able to raise his right hand to his mouth again. (Recorded by Muslim.)

(iii) If the person is one who should know better or from whom one would expect better, one may then resort to harsh speech and conduct with that person. Here harshness is used to wake the person up from his mistake and make him change his ways. This kind of approach can be found in many hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

For example, Muslim records that the Prophet (peace be upon him) saw a man wearing a gold ring. The Prophet (peace be upon him) took it from the man's finger and threw it away. He then said,

يَعْمِدُ أَحَدُكُمْ إِلَى جَمْرَةٍ مِنْ نَارٍ فَيَجْعَلُهَا فِي يَدِهِ

"Does one of you intentionally go to a coal of fire and put it on his hand?"

However, the advisor himself must make sure that he does not go beyond the acceptable limits in this approach. If the person responds to his words, he should thank him and ask Allah to reward him for his listening and changing of his ways.

The last stage of eradicating evil by one's speech is that of threat. If all of the above means do not have the desired effect, one can then threaten the sinner by saying, for example, "If you do not stop your action, I will have you beaten," or, "If you do not stop, I will contact the authorities," and so forth.

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[1] Fadhl-Ilaahi, *Min*, p. 40.

It is important that this threat be something reasonable and practical—and within the limits of the *shareeah.* If that is not the case, the sinner will not take the person seriously and will not care about what he is saying.

"And if he is not able to do so, then [he must change it] with his heart."

If a person is not able to remove evil with his tongue, he must remove it with his heart. The notion of "being capable" is the same with respect to the tongue as it was with respect to the hand. Hence, the reader can go to Figures 34.1a and 34.1b and replace, "changing by the hand" with "changing by the tongue" to identify the cases wherein a person should is required to change the evil with his tongue and the cases where he must change it with his heart.

Evil is never to be accepted. One should never be pleased with it. Everyone is required to "change" the evil around him. If a person cannot change the evil with his hand or his speech, he must then "change" it with his heart. This might be all that a person can do. Ibn Masood was quoted as saying, "Soon those who live among you will see evil and he will not be able to do anything other than have Allah know that he hates it."[1]

Everyone has different capabilities when it comes to changing evil. Some have the ability to change it with their hands while others do not have that ability. Those that do not have that ability are not sinful due to their shortcoming. Similarly, there are some who have the ability to change things with their speech while others, again, may not have that ability. However, there is one level concerning which everyone is capable. Nobody is excused when it comes to this level. This is the level of changing the evil with one's heart.

There are two requirements upon a Muslim with respect to his heart and evil. First, he must change it with his heart, as mentioned in this hadith. Second, he must fight it or struggle against it (*jihad*) with his heart, as mentioned in the hadith narrated by Abdullah ibn Masood,

مَا مِنْ نَبِيٍّ بَعَثَهُ اللَّهُ فِي أُمَّةٍ قَبْلِي إِلاَّ كَانَ لَهُ مِنْ أُمَّتِهِ حَوَارِيُّونَ وَأَصْحَابٌ يَأْخُذُونَ
بِسُنَّتِهِ وَيَقْتَدُونَ بِأَمْرِهِ ثُمَّ إِنَّهَا تَخْلُفُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ خُلُوفٌ يَقُولُونَ مَا لا يَفْعَلُونَ وَيَفْعَلُونَ
مَا لا يُؤْمَرُونَ فَمَنْ جَاهَدَهُمْ بِيَدِهِ فَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ وَمَنْ جَاهَدَهُمْ بِلِسَانِهِ فَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ وَمَنْ
جَاهَدَهُمْ بِقَلْبِهِ فَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ وَلَيْسَ وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ حَبَّةُ خَرْدَلٍ

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[1] Quoted in ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 245; al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 254.

"There is no prophet that was sent to a nation before me except that he had from his nation helpers and companions. They would follow his way and implement his orders. Then came afterwards generations that would say what they did not do and do what they did not say. Whoever struggled against them[1] with his hand is a believer. Whoever struggled against them with his tongue is a believer. And whoever struggled against them with his heart is a believer. Beyond that there is no faith, even equivalent to the amount of a mustard seed." (Recorded by Muslim.)

Al-Nawawi states that a person should directly repel or change an evil if he has the ability to do so. He says, for example, a person should himself break musical instruments, wine caskets and so forth when he can. If he finds a stolen item and he knows its owner, he should return it. If, however, he believes that by doing such it will lead to greater harm, such as himself or others being killed or physically harmed, then he tries to change the matter by his speech and admonition. If he fears that this also might lead to some greater harm, then he must refrain from that also and simply "change" the evil by his heart. If repelling the evil is going to lead to bloodshed or fighting, he must stop himself and take the matter to the proper authorities and let them handle it.[2] That is the only *shareeah* option open to him at that point. He does not have the right to stop any evil if his action would lead to greater harm for either himself or others.

It is when the person reaches this level of fearing bodily harm or loss to his wealth or family that he is no longer required to remove evil by his hand or tongue. Again, just fearing people's speech or being verbally abused, insulted or ridiculed is not enough of an excuse to prevent one from changing evil with one's hand or tongue.

Allah knows what is in the hearts of human beings. He knows who would repel evil if he had the chance and who may claim to repel evil in his heart but does not really do so. If a person truly hates an evil in his heart and wishes that he could remove that evil but simply does not have the means to remove that evil, Allah will reward him for his intention in the same way that He rewards the one who removes that evil.

Ibn Taimiya wrote,

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[1] Struggling against something is more comprehensive than changing an evil.

[2] Al-Nawawi, *Sharh Saheeh*, vol. 2, p. 24. According to al-Ghazzaali (in al-Zabeedi, vol. 8, p. 98), if it takes more than one person to remove an evil by hand, they may support each other and work to remove that evil. Even if they have to resort to force to do so, they may if it is a case of necessity and no other option is available to them. Al-Ghazzaali's argument has some logic to it but again, though, the overriding principle that must be remembered is that if the result is a greater evil or harm than the original evil, then one is considered "incapable" and must move down to the next level of changing the evil, that of changing it with the tongue. For example, in the United States, there are some Muslim communities who seek to impose the Islamic legal punishment on sinners. By doing so, they are putting the entire Muslim community and mosque at risk from the legal authorities. One cannot risk the safety of the entire community just to punish an individual for a sin he committed.

> As for love, hatred, want and dislike in the heart, it must be complete and definitive. One will only find a shortcoming in that aspect if there is a shortcoming in *imaan* itself. However, the actions of the body are according to one’s ability. If the want of the heart and its hatred is complete and perfect and the person acts accordingly given his ability, he will be given the reward of the person who performs the act completely [even if he did not perform the act because he did not have the ability to do so].[1]

What is the Meaning and Actual Benefit of “Changing it with the Heart?”

“Changing it with the heart” means that the evil is hated in the person’s heart and if the person had the ability to remove it, he would remove it.[2]

This is not a completely passive aspect, as some people might suspect. First, for the individual himself, this is one of the means by which a person keeps his heart pure. The heart is definitely affected and influenced by what it witnesses and what it becomes willing to accept. One of the worst effects of the modern media is that Muslims are witnessing on television and in movies acts that are clearly forbidden. But when they continue to watch them over and over again, they are no longer shocked by them. Their emotions no longer race and they sometimes even begin to accept such evils as normal. Then when they see other Muslims, maybe even their own children, performing the same evils, they are not shocked and scared to death but they have already been conditioned to accept it and think of it as part of modern-day life.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated,

تُعْرَضُ الْفِتَنُ عَلَى الْقُلُوبِ كَالْحَصِيرِ عُودًا عُودًا فَأَيُّ قَلْبٍ أُشْرِبَهَا نُكِتَ فِيهِ نُكْتَةٌ
سَوْدَاءُ وَأَيُّ قَلْبٍ أَنْكَرَهَا نُكِتَ فِيهِ نُكْتَةٌ بَيْضَاءُ حَتَّى تَصِيرَ عَلَى قَلْبَيْنِ عَلَى أَبْيَضَ مِثْلِ
الصَّفَا فَلاَ تَضُرُّهُ فِتْنَةٌ مَا دَامَتِ السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالأَرْضُ وَالْآخَرُ أَسْوَدُ مُرْبَادًّا كَالْكُوزِ
مُجَخِّيًا لاَ يَعْرِفُ مَعْرُوفًا وَلاَ يُنْكِرُ مُنْكَرًا إِلاَّ مَا أُشْرِبَ مِنْ هَوَاهُ

“Temptations and trials will be presented to men’s hearts like the way a reed mat is woven, stick by stick. And any heart which is filled by them will have a black mark put into it. But any heart which rejects them will have a white mark put into it. The result will be that there will be two types of hearts: one white like a white stone which will not be harmed by any turmoil or temptation so long as the heavens and earth endure; and the heart black and dust-colored like a vessel which is overturned, not recognizing what is good or rejecting what is evil but only being impregnated with passion." (Recorded by Muslim.)

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[1] Quoted in al-Masood, pp. 35-36.

[2] Cf., al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 247.

Second, "changing the evil with one's heart" can save the person from Allah's punishment. To be pleased with evil is very similar to performing the evil itself. Therefore, if a Muslim does not "change the evil with his heart," by continuing to hate that evil, he may be exposing himself to Allah's punishment.

Third, when someone really hates something in his heart, his behavior becomes affected. He will not be willing to sit in the presence of that evil.[1] He will not even like those people who commit that evil. Allah says in the Quran,

وَقَدْ نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِى ٱلْكِتَـٰبِ أَنْ إِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ ءَايَـٰتِ ٱللَّهِ يُكْفَرُ بِهَا وَيُسْتَهْزَأُ
بِهَا فَلَا تَقْعُدُوا۟ مَعَهُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَخُوضُوا۟ فِى حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِۦٓ ۚ إِنَّكُمْ إِذًا مِّثْلُهُمْ ۗ
إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ جَامِعُ ٱلْمُنَـٰفِقِينَ وَٱلْكَـٰفِرِينَ فِى جَهَنَّمَ جَمِيعًا

"And it has already been revealed to you in the Book that when you hear the Verses of Allah being denied and mocked, then sit not with them until they engage in a talk other than that; [but if you stay with them] certainly, in that case, you would be like them. Surely, Allah will collect the hypocrites and disbelievers all together in Hell" (*al-Nisaa* 140). This is a clear warning that if one does not remove himself from the place of evil and is willing to sit and witness the evil, then he may be reckoned with those people who commit the evil.[2]

Commenting on the above verse, al-Qurtubi wrote,

> This can be used to indicate that one must stay away from the people of sins when they perform evil acts. This is because the one who does not stay away from them [must be] pleased with their acts and being pleased with disbelief [for example] is itself disbelief. Allah said, "Then you will be similar to them." Therefore, everyone who sits in a setting of sinful behavior and he does not repel their actions, he and they will be the same with respect to their responsibility [for the sins being committed there]. It is a must that he repel their evil if they speak or act in a sinful manner. If he is not able to repel their actions, then he must get up and leave them to ensure that he is not from those being discussed in this verse... If it is confirmed that one must stay away from the people of sins,

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[1] Al-Sabt points out that some people believe that as long as they hate the evil, there is nothing wrong if they sit and witness the evil. That is not correct. That is, in fact, a sign that they do not truly or completely hate that evil. Cf., Khaalid al-Sabt, *al-Amr*, p. 335.

[2] This is assuming, of course, that the person has the ability to remove himself from that place of evil.

> then one must even more so stay away from the people of innovations and desires.[1]

Hating something in the heart leads to specific attitudes and actions toward a deed.[2] This attitude or action may lead to the evil being removed or lessened. For example, suppose there is a group of Muslims in a person's house who begin to drink beer. One believer among them hates that deed yet he has not the ability to change it with his hand. He also realizes that if he speaks about it, a group present will start attacking "extremist Muslims" like himself. Therefore, he feels that even speaking about it will lead to more harm. His hatred for it in his heart leaves him with only one option: leave that gathering. If that believer is someone who the host or a group present respect or love and want to have present at that gathering, they may put the beer away because they know it offends him and they do not want him to leave. In that case, the believer did not act or speak against the evil. However, he changed the evil by his heart and his unwillingness to sit in the presence of that evil.

Finally, the hatred of that evil and its "changing with the heart" makes the person ever ready to remove the evil whenever he has the ability to do so. The person will never accept that evil deed. He is, in essence, just waiting for the moment that he will be able to strike out against it and put an end to it. He is in constant preparation and readiness. In this sense, it is a very positive and necessary aspect of change. If the person loses this feeling in his heart, then if he should ever be in a situation where he could have changed the evil, he may not do so because his heart and soul was not prepared to strike at that evil at the first opportunity.

Being Pleased with an Evil and The Heart that is Dead

Being pleased with an evil is a sin in itself. Every Muslim must realize that evils are displeasing to Allah. Out of his love for Allah, a Muslim must hate everything that is displeasing to his Lord. If he does not have this feeling, it is a clear sign that there is a shortcoming in his faith. In addition, he will be held accountable for his liking a sin even if he does not witness or perform that deed. Abu Dawood recorded the following hadith,

الْخَطِيئَةُ فِي الأَرْضِ كَانَ مَنْ شَهِدَهَا فَكَرِهَهَا وَقَالَ مَرَّةً أَنْكَرَهَا كَانَ كَمَنْ إِذَا عُمِلَتِ
غَابَ عَنْهَا وَمَنْ غَابَ عَنْهَا فَرَضِيَهَا كَانَ كَمَنْ شَهِدَهَا

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[1] Al-Qurtubi, vol. 5, p. 418.

[2] These actions are not the actual action of changing the evil, such as breaking a wine bottle, but they are actions whose consequences lead to the changing of the evil. Hence, they do not fall under the category of changing the evil with one's hand but are under the category of changing it with one's heart.

"If a sin is committed on the earth, the one who witnessed it and hated it— and one time he said, 'rebukes it'— is like one who was not present. And the one who was not present at the sin but is pleased with it is like one who was present [and did not repel it]."[1]

If a person sees evil around him and does not have much feeling or hatred in his heart for it, this is a sign that his heart is diseased. But when the heart no longer cares about the evil that is around it, it is, in reality, a dead heart. In other words, if a person does not mind seeing evil and he does not hate seeing all of the acts that are displeasing to Allah around him, it means that his heart has lost all of its faith and is, for all intents and purposes, a dead or useless heart. Ibn Masood was once asked what is a dead heart and he answered, "The heart that does not recognize and like the good and that does not reject and repel the evil."[2]

"And that is the slightest [effect of] faith." [3]

In their commentary on this hadith, al-Bugha and Mistu wrote,

> Ordering good and eradicating evil is a characteristic of faith. Those who order good and forbid evil are at different levels of merit based on their level of ordering good and eradicating evil. The one who changes the evil with his hand is better than the one who changes it with his tongue. And the one who changes it with his tongue is more virtuous than the one who rejects it with his heart, even if he was incapable of doing the other acts. This is indicated by the Prophet's (peace be upon him) words, "And that is the weakest of faith."[4]

It is true that the Prophet (peace be upon him) literally stated, "That is the weakest of faith." However, the interpretation given by al-Bugha and Mistu, which is a common understanding of this hadith, does not seem to be correct. This hadith is not talking about the ranks of faith and believers.[5] Therefore, it is wrong to say, based on this hadith, that the one who removes evil by his hand is at a higher level of faith than the one who removes it by his tongue and so forth.

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[1] Recorded by Abu Dawood and al-Tabaraani. According to al-Hilaali (*Eeqaadh*, p. 456), it is *hasan.*

[2] Quoted in al-Masood, p. 34.

[3] Some of the commentators on this hadith, such as ibn Daqeeq al-Eid (*Sharh*, p. 90) and al-Haitami (*Fath*, p. 247), noted that in other narrations of this hadith, the final words are, "That is the weakest of faith and beyond that there is not even a mustard's seed [weight of faith]." However, it seems, Allah knows best, that they are referring to a different hadith (which was also quoted in the commentary above) and not this particular hadith. It is certain that the reports of this hadith as recorded by Muslim, Abu Dawood, ibn Maajah and Ahmad do not have those additional words at the ending of the hadith.

[4] Al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 266.

[5] Similarly, both ibn Rajab (*Jaami*, vol. 2, pp. 253-254) and Sultaan (p. 295) wrote to the effect, "The one who has the ability to do something and does it is better than the one who does not have the ability to do it. The woman, for example, is excused from praying during her menses, however, the Prophet considered that a shortcoming of theirs in the religion."

The reason this interpretation may not be proper is that the strength or virtue of one's faith, in general, is not tied into what one is capable of performing. If one is not capable of performing a specific deed, it does not mean that his faith is less than the faith of the one who can perform that deed. Indeed, his faith may be much stronger but that deed may simply not be available to him. However, he may have a sincerer intention and stronger will to perform that deed if he were given the opportunity to do so. Hence, he will be rewarded according to that intention and will.

Therefore, what is meant by faith here is actually "the effect or fruit of faith". In other words, faith has specific manifestations or effects. Among those manifestations is the objection to whatever is evil. The existence of "faith" will lead the person to try to remove that evil. If he can do so by his hand, he will do so. Otherwise, he will do so by his tongue. If he cannot even do that, then, the least manifestation of his faith, he will "change" that deed with his heart. The person's faith may be as strong as those who change evil with their hands but he is simply not able to manifest his faith in the way that they are able to.[1]

Therefore, to understand faith here as meaning, "the manifestation of faith" seems to be the best interpretation.

Al-Qaari also mentions another interpretation: These words are in reference to the age of weak faith. In other words, if the people as a whole of a specific time period are of strong faith, like during the time of the Companions, they would be able to remove evil by their hands or, at the very least, by their tongues. If the believers, though, have to resort to "changing" evil just with their hearts, like they have to do in the current era, this is a sign that the faith of the people or era itself is weak. Otherwise, they would be able to do more than that.[2]

Although al-Qaari's interpretation is an interesting interpretation, it does not seem to be the strongest interpretation.

The Relationship Between Faith and Eradicating Evil

In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has linked faith with eradicating evil. There is a clear and definite relationship between the two.

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[1] The following scholars came to similar conclusions as above: al-Nawawi, ***Sharh Sahih***, vol. 2, p. 24 and ***Sharh Matn***, p. 129; Shihaab al-Deen al-Qaraafi, ***al-Furooq*** (Beirut: Aalim al-Kitaab, n.d.), vol. 4, p. 256; ibn Daqeeq al-Eid, ***Sharh***, p. 90; al-Teebi, vol. 10, p. 3260; al-Haitami, ***Fath***, p. 248 and al-Mudaabaghi, p. 248. In a parallel discussion, ibn Taimiya (*Majmoo*, vol. 28, p. 127) stated that each of the believers is fulfilling the acts of faith that are obligatory upon them. Al-Nawawi (*Sharh Matn*, p. 129) pointed out that the greatest manifestation of faith is to give up one's life as a martyr in the attempt to order good and forbid evil.

[2] Al-Qaari, vol. 9, p. 328.

This relationship has been beautifully explained by Muhammad al-Sindi who wrote,

> No one is going to reject *munkar* in the way it should be rejected except for the one who knows Allah in the proper way, knows His right, and loves Him from the depths of the heart. [He is also only the one] who sees that everything is in Allah's hand and no one other than Allah is of any concern to him. This is the person who, if he sees his Beloved disobeyed or His ruling contradicted, will stand out of jealousy and honor for the sake of Allah and to get closer to Him. He will rebuke the evildoer no matter who he may be and he will strive his utmost to remove that evil. The one who truly and sincerely loves Allah will not take disobedience to his Beloved lightly and he will not have the patience to witness it. And, furthermore, he will not love those people [who commit such evil]. That stance is not achieved except by those people who love Allah and whom He loves and who do not fear, for the sake of Allah, the reproach of anyone. Among those people are Umar ibn al-Khattaab.
>
> During our time[1], the "jealousy" or rage for the sake of Allah has been lost from the hearts of the servants. The evil has become accepted and what is good has become rejected. The one who cries should cry over that disaster.[2]

Those Muslims who, in the name of brotherhood, love, friendship and mercy, accept and give full love to Muslims "as they are" and do not even consider removing the evil that they see around them are either lacking in their faith or have a great misunderstanding of what faith is all about. In reality, they give a preference to the feelings and wants of those Muslims over what Allah has commanded in the Quran. Obviously, in the heart of a true believer, Allah comes first. Acting in a way that is offensive or disliked to Allah can never be accepted or approved by the heart that is filled with faith.

The Negative Results of Not Repelling Evil

Before concluding the discussion of this hadith, it is important to note some of the results of not applying this hadith. In other words, what will happen if Muslims see evil and they do not repel it according to their abilities? This is a very important question. The Quran replies to this question to some extent and the Prophet (peace be upon him) also touched upon it in a number of hadith.

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[1] Al-Sindi died in the year 1163 A.H., so he lived about three centuries ago.

[2] Al-Sindi, *Sharh al-Arbaeen*, p. 105.

Not eradicating evil has been a source of cursing by the prophets. Allah says,

لُعِنَ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ مِنۢ بَنِيٓ إِسۡرَٰٓءِيلَ عَلَىٰ لِسَانِ دَاوُۥدَ وَعِيسَى ٱبۡنِ
مَرۡيَمَۚ ذَٰلِكَ بِمَا عَصَواْ وَّكَانُواْ يَعۡتَدُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾ كَانُواْ لَا يَتَنَاهَوۡنَ
عَن مُّنكَرٖ فَعَلُوهُۚ لَبِئۡسَ مَا كَانُواْ يَفۡعَلُونَ

"Those among the Tribes of Israel who disbelieved were cursed by the tongue of David and Jesus son of Mary. That was because they disobeyed and were ever transgressing beyond bounds. They used not to forbid one another from the wrong which they committed. Vile indeed was what they used to do" (*al-Maaidah* 78-79).

Allah also says in the Quran,

وَٱتَّقُواْ فِتۡنَةٗ لَّا تُصِيبَنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُواْ مِنكُمۡ خَآصَّةٗۖ وَٱعۡلَمُوٓاْ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ
شَدِيدُ ٱلۡعِقَابِ

"And fear the affliction and trial which affects not in particular (only) those of you who do wrong and know that Allah is severe in punishment" (*al-Anfaal* 25). It is narrated that the Companion ibn Abbas explained this verse by saying that Allah has ordered the believers not to accept any evil in their presence without working to remove it. Otherwise, Allah will afflict them with a general punishment. Ibn Katheer called this explanation, "very good."[1]

Surah ali-Imraan verses 104-105 reads,

وَلۡتَكُن مِّنكُمۡ أُمَّةٞ يَدۡعُونَ إِلَى ٱلۡخَيۡرِ وَيَأۡمُرُونَ بِٱلۡمَعۡرُوفِ وَيَنۡهَوۡنَ عَنِ
ٱلۡمُنكَرِۚ وَأُوْلَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلۡمُفۡلِحُونَ ﴿١٠٤﴾ وَلَا تَكُونُواْ كَٱلَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُواْ
وَٱخۡتَلَفُواْ مِنۢ بَعۡدِ مَا جَآءَهُمُ ٱلۡبَيِّنَٰتُۚ وَأُوْلَٰٓئِكَ لَهُمۡ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٞ

"Let there arise out of you a party of people inviting to all that is good, enforcing what is right and eradicating what is evil. And it is they who are the successful. And be not as those who divided and differed among themselves after the clear proofs had come to them. It is they for whom there is an awful torment" (*ali-Imraan* 104-5). Two things should be noted about this verse. First, the Arabic structure of, "it is they who are the successful," implies that they are the only ones who will be successful. Second, as ibn Uthaimeen pointed out, the mentioning of division and factionalism after mentioning the ordering of good and eradicating of evil indicates that abandoning the ordering of good and eradicating of evil is a cause of division and factionalism.[1] In other words, if Muslims do not stop the evil of heresies and people spreading false ideas about others, it will lead to division and hatred among all.

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[1] Ibn Katheer, *Tafseer*, vol. 2, p. 331. Also see al-Qurtubi, vol. 8, pp. 391-392.

Al-Bukhari recorded that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

مَثَلُ الْقَائِمِ عَلَى حُدُودِ اللَّهِ وَالْوَاقِعِ فِيهَا كَمَثَلِ قَوْمٍ اسْتَهَمُوا عَلَى سَفِينَةٍ فَأَصَابَ
بَعْضُهُمْ أَعْلَاهَا وَبَعْضُهُمْ أَسْفَلَهَا فَكَانَ الَّذِينَ فِي أَسْفَلِهَا إِذَا اسْتَقَوْا مِنَ الْمَاءِ مَرُّوا عَلَى
مَنْ فَوْقَهُمْ فَقَالُوا لَوْ أَنَّا خَرَقْنَا فِي نَصِيبِنَا خَرْقًا وَلَمْ نُؤْذِ مَنْ فَوْقَنَا فَإِنْ يَتْرُكُوهُمْ وَمَا
أَرَادُوا هَلَكُوا جَمِيعًا وَإِنْ أَخَذُوا عَلَى أَيْدِيهِمْ نَجَوْا وَنَجَوْا جَمِيعًا

"The similitude of the one who fulfills Allah's command [by eradicating evil] and the one who falls into what Allah forbids is like a people who drew lots for places on a boat. Some of them got the upper level of the boat while others were on the lower level. Whenever the people on the lower level wanted water, they had to go to the people on the upper level. Therefore, they said, 'If we were to make a hole in our portion we would not have to bother the people above us [to get water].' If they [the people on the upper level] leave them to what they want to do, all of them would be destroyed. If, instead, they take them by their hands [and stop them from what they plan on doing], they will be saved and they will save all of them."

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said,

مَا مِنْ قَوْمٍ يُعْمَلُ فِيهِمْ بِالْمَعَاصِي ثُمَّ يَقْدِرُونَ عَلَى أَنْ يُغَيِّرُوا ثُمَّ لَا يُغَيِّرُوا إِلَّا يُوشِكُ أَنْ
يَعُمَّهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْهُ بِعِقَاب

"There is no people among which evil is committed and they have the ability to change that but they do not change it except that Allah will soon afflict them with a punishment that will affect all of them."[2] Another narration of the same hadith in *Sunan Abu Dawood* states,

مَا مِنْ قَوْمٍ يُعْمَلُ فِيهِمْ بِالْمَعَاصِي هُمْ أَكْثَرُ مِمَّنْ يَعْمَلُهُ

"There is no people among which evil is committed and they [the rest of them] are more than those who commit [the sins]..."

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[1] Ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 4, p. 497.

[2] Recorded by Abu Dawood, al-Tirmidhi and ibn Maajah. According to al-Hilaali (*Eeqaadh*, p. 457), it is *sahih.*

Another hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) states,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لا يُعَذِّبُ الْعَامَّةَ بِعَمَلِ الْخَاصَّةِ حَتَّى يَرَوْا الْمُنْكَرَ بَيْنَ ظَهْرَانَيْهِمْ وَهُمْ
قَادِرُونَ عَلَى أَنْ يُنْكِرُوهُ فَلا يُنْكِرُوهُ فَإِذَا فَعَلُوا ذَلِكَ عَذَّبَ اللَّهُ الْخَاصَّةَ وَالْعَامَّةَ

"Allah does not punish the general masses for what a specific group does until they see an evil in front of them and they have the ability to repel it but they do not repel it. When they do that, Allah punishes the particular group and the masses."[1]

Ahmad and ibn Maajah recorded that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَيَسْأَلُ الْعَبْدَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ حَتَّى يَقُولَ مَا مَنَعَكَ إِذْ رَأَيْتَ الْمُنْكَرَ أَنْ تُنْكِرَهُ فَإِذَا
لَقَّنَ اللَّهُ عَبْدًا حُجَّتَهُ قَالَ يَا رَبِّ رَجَوْتُكَ وَفَرِقْتُ مِنَ النَّاسِ

"Certainly, Allah will ask the servant on the Day of Resurrection. He will even ask him, 'What kept you from repelling an evil when you saw it.' When Allah prompts the slave to understand his argument, he says, 'O Lord, I put my hope in You [that is, Your forgiveness] and I had a fear of the people.'"[2]

Finally, the abandoning of the ordering of good and eradicating of evil is one of the causes for a person's supplications (*dua*) not to be responded to by Allah. Another hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) states,

وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لَتَأْمُرُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَلَتَنْهَوُنَّ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ أَوْ لَيُوشِكَنَّ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَبْعَثَ
عَلَيْكُمْ عِقَابًا مِنْ عِنْدِهِ ثُمَّ لَتَدْعُنَّهُ فَلا يَسْتَجِيبُ لَكُمْ

"By the One in whose hand is my soul, you must order good and forbid evil or Allah will soon send upon you a punishment from Himself and then you will supplicate to Him and He will not respond to you."[3]

One can see from the above that there are many factors that should drive a believer to ordering good and eradicating evil. These include: hoping for reward from Allah, fearing punishment from Allah for not doing it, love for Allah and love for obedience to Him, hating something for the sake of Allah when His laws are violated, and having mercy and compassion for one's fellow Muslims by trying to take them away from acts that may lead them to Hell. If these points are kept in mind, it becomes very easy, Allah willing, to bear the hardships that often times are involved with ordering good and eradicating evil.[1]

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[1] Recorded by Ahmad. Zuhair al-Shaaweesh and Shuaib al-Arnaoot give the strong impression that the hadith is *hasan*. See their notes to al-Husain al-Baghawi, *Sharh al-Sunnah* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islaami, 1983), vol. 14, pp. 346-347.

[2] Recorded by ibn Maajah, Ahmad and ibn Hibbaan. According to al-Hilaali (*Eeqaadh*, p. 457), it is *sahih*.

[3] Recorded by Ahmad and al-Tirmidhi. According to al-Albaani, it is *hasan*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 1189.

Ordering Good and Eradicating Evil is One of the Most Important Aspects of the Brotherhood of Islam

The ordering of good and eradicating of evil is not to be done for a person to demonstrate that he is better than others or more knowledgeable of Islam. Instead, it is done out of one's love for Allah and out of one's love (also for the sake of Allah) for his fellow believers. A believer should love for his brother what he loves for himself and no believer would love that he falls into acts that are displeasing to Allah. A believer should feel sad and hurt for his brothers when he sees them ignoring their obligations or falling into sins. He feels sad that Allah's commands are being ignored and he feels sad that his brethren might be leading themselves to the Hell-fire. This feeling should drive him to act or speak to them on their behalf, to help them as one helps a child who is doing something dangerous although the child has no idea of what is going on.

Allah describes the believers in the following words,

وَٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَٱلْمُؤْمِنَٰتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَآءُ بَعْضٍۚ يَأْمُرُونَ بِٱلْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ
عَنِ ٱلْمُنكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ ٱللَّهَ
وَرَسُولَهُۥٓۚ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ ٱللَّهُۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

"The believers, men and women, are helpers and supporters of one another. They order what is good and forbid what is evil. They also establish the prayer, pay the zakat and obey Allah and His messenger. These are the ones to whom Allah will show mercy to. Verily, Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise" (*al-Tauba* 71). In other words, a believer is a protector and close friend to his fellow believers. He will not be happy to see them hurting themselves. He will realize that it is his responsibility to do what he can to keep them from the wrong acts that they are doing. They are actually hurting themselves by those acts. However, they may also be harming the remainder of the society. It is not fair that individuals be allowed to do such acts that are hurting the other members of the brotherhood. Therefore, this feeling of brotherhood for the sake of Allah is one of the driving forces behind ordering good and eradicating evil.

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[1] Cf., ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 255.

When Muslims stop ordering good and eradicating evil when they have the ability to do so, it is a sign that they have lost the true brotherhood of Islam. This is a sign that they do not care if their brother goes to Paradise or Hell. This is a sign that they do not care if one brother or sister does things to harm the other brothers and sisters in the community.

All of this points to the importance of ordering good and eradicating evil and its direct relation to faith. If one has true faith, he will order good and forbid evil to the best of his ability. If such ordering good and eradicating evil is beyond his means, then, at the very least, he will hate the evil that is going on around him. He will hate to see what his brothers and sisters in Islam are doing and he would wish that there is something that he could do about it. This is, as this hadith points out, the least manifestation of faith. If even this is absent from the person, it means he has lost every ounce of true faith.

Other Points Related to This Hadith

- It is part of Allah's mercy upon His servants that He does not hold them responsible for things which are beyond their ability or control.
- It must be realized that what is meant by "incapability" is a case where a person believes that most likely the results will be harmful. This might be based on previous experience or knowing the nature of the people that he is dealing with. It is not referring to cases where the person is just dreaming or speculating that something negative might occur while, in reality, he has no reason or proof to expect such a negative result. In that case, the person is still obliged to change the evil. It is only when he is fairly certain or has strong reason to believe that negative results will occur that he is then excused.[1]
- If a person destroys another's belonging and that article was something for which there is no benefit from an Islamic perspective, such as musical instruments, he is not required to reimburse the owner for his damages. Such articles have no value to them and, thus, cannot be reimbursed. However, some things are evil but not completely. In other words, they may also contain some good to them. Al-Masood says that if a person owns a book, for example, and some of it is good while some of it is evil, the evil parts only should be removed and destroyed and the remainder of the person's property, the book, should not be harmed.[2]
- The command to order good and forbid evil is irrespective of the person that one is dealing with. In other words, even if one is dealing with the ruler of the land or a famous scholar, if he is performing an evil, he should be stopped from his evil or encouraged to change his ways. One must make sure to stop the evil in such a way that it does not lead to more evil. This is

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[1] Cf., al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 258.

[2] Al-Masood, p. 24.

especially true with respect to the rulers and scholars. Bringing down scholars and religious people or exposing their small mistakes may be very harmful, as people may lose confidence in their religion. Similarly, overly criticizing rulers may lead to greater harm as civil rebellion and unrest can break out. However, rulers are in need of reminders and correction as much as any one else. This was the way established by the rightly-guided caliphs. Abu Bakr once said, "I have been appointed the ruler over you but I am not the best among you. If I do well, assist me. If I do wrong, straighten me out. Obey me as long as I obey Allah concerning you. If I disobey him, there is no obedience for me upon you." Umar also said, "There is no good in you [citizens] if you do not say it [words of advice] and there is no good in us [rulers] if we do not accept it." Saeed ibn Jubair said to ibn Abbas, "Should I order the leader what is good and keep him from evil?" He answered, "If you fear that he will kill you, then no." He continued asking the question until ibn Abbas finally said, "If you must do so, then make it between you and him."[1] Imam al-Haramain stated that if the leader was unjust and could not be corrected by speech, the leaders of the country, who are known as *ahl-hill wa al-aqd*, should remove him from the rule. Al-Nawawi points out, though, that this is to be done only if it will not lead to greater harm.[2] In other words, one must do one's best to avoid bloodshed and the harming of the Muslim masses.

- Related to the previous point, one should also not allow one's friendship, closeness or need of another influence him when it comes to eradicating evil. If a Muslim has a close Muslim friend who is doing evil, he should try to stop him. He should not value his friendship more than Allah's command and compromise his religion for his friend. Indeed, if the other Muslim were a true friend, he would not put his companion into a situation where he has to choose between his friendship or pleasing Allah.[3] Similarly, one should not allow blood relationship to affect how one views evil. Sometimes people remain quiet or excuse evil when it is done by their parents although they would never accept such evil if it were done by others. This is indeed a great test for the human when he sees evil coming from someone so close and beloved to himself. But he must decide whether to stand up for the sake of Allah or to forget about Allah because of his parents. One of the greatest trials a person faces is seeing evil from a person whom he is financially in need of. Many times, because of his financial needs, he remains silent in front of the evil that the other one does. That is not proper. The true sustenance comes from Allah and not from that other person. By remaining silent to get some financial gain, one is only risking Allah's displeasure in the Hereafter.[1]

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[1] Quoted in al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 260.

[2] See al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 260.

[3] As al-Nawawi (*Sharh Saheeh*, vol. 2, p. 23) wrote, "The [true] close friend and beloved of a man is the one who strives to build his Hereafter, even if that leads to some shortcoming in this world. And his enemy is the one who strives to destroy or lessen his Hereafter, even if because of that it may bring him some superficial benefit in this world."

- Removing evil by one's hand is not the sole right of the government nor does one have to take the ruler's permission to do so. Instead, it is the right of every Muslim who has the ability to do so as long as it does not lead to a greater harm or evil.[2]
- The obligation to order good and forbid evil is not something specific for men only, as noted above. Women also, within their means and ability, must forbid evil. In particular, by their speech, they should repel evil among the other women, among their male relatives and among children. Ahmad records in his *Musnad* that Aisha saw a woman wearing a garment that had a shape of a cross on it. Aisha told her, "Remove that from your clothing for if the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) saw that on a garment, he would cut it off."[3] Aisha one time saw her brother making ablution quickly to catch the prayer and she told him to complete the ablution for she heard the Prophet (peace be upon him) say, "Woe to the heels from the fire." (Recorded by Muslim.) If they are not able to forbid evil with their speech, then they must change it with their hearts, as is the case with men. Most likely, for women, because of the restrictions upon them, they will have to change evil most by their hearts only.[4]
- It is recommended to advise a person concerning his faults privately. This is because, in general, people respond in a much more positive fashion when being corrected privately and not in front of others. Imam al-Shafiee stated, "Whoever admonished his brother privately, he advised him and made him better. However, the one who admonished him publicly simply exposed him and shamed him."[5]

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[1] Some people today are very keen on pointing out the evils of particular governments but when it comes to the evils in their friends, families and even their ownselves, they become very accommodating and compromising. It is as if it is all right for his friends to commit evil deeds but it is not all right for the governments to do it. Some even go to a strange opposite extreme. They will make numerous excuses for the government and will not allow anyone to criticize the government, but if another Muslim, even a Muslim scholar makes even the slightest mistake— not even an evil deed— they will criticize him, brand him as a heretic and practically throw him out of the fold of Islam. Both of these two approaches described are wrong. A Muslim and a believer must be just. Evil is evil no matter who it comes from. It must be opposed or, at the very least, hated no matter who the source of the evil is.

[2] This point is discussed in detail in al-Ammaar, pp. 70-75. He makes the point that one must distinguish between the person appointed by the government as an authority in ordering good and eradicating evil and one who does so on a voluntary basis. The voluntary worker does not need to be approved or appointed by the government.

[3] Recorded by Ahmad. The meaning of the part concerning the Prophet (peace be upon him) is recorded in al-Bukhari.

[4] For more on this point, see Fadhl-Ilaahi, *Masooliyah al-Nisaa fi al-Amr bi-l-Maroof wa al-Nahi an al-Munkar* (Pakistan: Idaarah Tarjumaan al-Islaam, 1415 A.H.), *passim*.

[5] Quoted in Sultaan, p. 293; also quoted with slightly different wording in al-Nawawi, *Sharh Saheeh*, vol. 2, p. 23.

- If no one opposes evil, evil will be allowed to spread. It may spread so much that it dominates and takes over a society. This is one of the greatest problems facing the liberal societies of the West. This "liberal" approach and call to "freedom" must not be allowed to dominate Muslim lands. In the West, even if a person does not believe that another act is correct, under the guise of "freedom and democracy," he has very little room to oppose it. It is even incorrect for him to oppose it in his heart, because that goes against the very foundation of freedom of thought and freedom of action that they claim to believe in. He must accept the deed and stand up for the person's right to perform the deed in the name of liberty and freedom. That is why, for example, one can find "Christians" standing up for the rights of gays and others who are acting in un-Christian like fashion. The right of "freedom" has become more important than ethics and morals. One cannot judge other's deeds but must simply accept them in the name of "freedom." Unfortunately, people are trying to spread this way of thinking throughout the Muslim lands— indeed, this way of thinking is spreading throughout the Muslim world. This way of thinking is absolutely unacceptable from an Islamic point of view. Any act that is defined as evil by the *shareeah* is an evil and must be opposed. It can never be accepted in the name of "freedom," "democracy," "progress," "civilization," or any other slogans it is given. These are all false and satanic plots. Evil is evil and must be changed by one's hands, tongue or heart. If not, the Muslims are sinful and may even lose all semblance of their faith.
- Imam Ahmad said, "Ordering good and eradicating evil is like jihad. It is obligatory upon one person to have patience and struggle against two and he may not flee from those two. It is not obligatory upon him to be patient and face more than that. If he is able to bear the harm and is strong enough [so he takes on more than two people], that is best. Allah said, 'Enjoin right and forbid evil and bear with patience whatever befalls you' [*Luqmaan* 17]. If a person fears being verbally abused or having the people say something about him, something of that nature does not remove the obligation upon him."[1]
- Al-Bugha and Mistu point out that one must have the right intention when ordering good and eradicating evil. One must not do so out of love of fame or to have dominance or power over others. Instead, one must do so out of the love of Allah and hatred for seeing His laws ignored or violated. One must also do so as a mercy to the believers and as a kind of *naseeha* to them, which falls under the category of "for the sake of Allah."[2] Although those comments are true for any act of worship, they probably emphasized this point in their discussion of this hadith because this is an area where

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[1] Quoted in al-Bugha and Mistu, pp. 261-262. Ibn Shibrima said something similar to that. See ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 249.

[2] Al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 266.

Satan easily misguides people. Ordering good and eradicating evil is an opportunity to display one's knowledge and bravery for the sake of Allah. Hence, it is an area in which acting for show and popularity can be a common disease. Therefore, every Muslim must be clear to himself as to why exactly he is ordering good and eradicating evil.

- Sultaan points out that the circumstances surrounding Abu Saeed's narration of this hadith, in which he objected to the ruler Marwaan's actions, is evidence that it is permissible to oppose the rulers with one's hand. However, of course, one is not allowed to do that if it will lead to bloodshed or greater harm.[1] Ibn Rajab also states that it is allowed to spill the wine of the rulers or break their musical instruments. He says that if they order some kind of *dhulm* (wrong, oppression) and one has the ability to stop it, he should do so. All of that is permissible and does not fall under the category of fighting or revolting against the ruler. However, using weapons to revolt against the Muslims rulers and the spilling of Muslim blood is not permissible.[2]
- As noted earlier, a Muslim must remain away from evil. This is part of his "changing it with his heart" as referred to in this hadith. The scholars have discussed the case where a person enters a place in which there is evil but not specifically in the portion where he will be. For example, suppose a person is in a shopping mall which contains stores that sell unacceptable items. It seems that it is permissible for him to be in that situation as long as he does not enter the actual portions where the evil is existing. If a person is invited to a wedding party and in some portion of the party area there is evil but not where he is or where the food is being served and so forth, he may stay in that place. However, al-Sabt notes that one must distinguish between a person whose example is going to be followed and whose presence at that place may be misunderstood as accepting of that evil. In a case of that nature, that person should not stay at that wedding party. At the same time, also, avoiding the places of evil does not mean that one sacrifices acts that are required by the *shareeah* because of the presence of a lesser evil. For example, one must still attend the mosque even if the only mosque available to him is one which has decorations or pictures on the wall. Similarly, as has been ascribed to Imam Ahmad, if a person is following a funeral procession and then people start wailing or playing a hand-drum, one does not leave what is ordered by the *shareeah* due to that lesser evil that is present. Allah knows best.[3]
- Those "callers to Islam" today who are making everything "permissible" for the Muslims— those "speakers" and others who are calling many things *halaal* even though they are clear violations of the Quran and sunnah and,

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[1] Sultaan, p. 295.

[2] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, pp. 248-249.

[3] Cf., al-Sabt, *al-Amr*, pp. 342-3.

many times, these "callers" are aware of that fact but continue in this way to "make things easy for the people"— must have a shortcoming in two areas: in their love of Allah and in their love for their fellow Muslims. No one who truly and completely loves Allah can be happy when people follow their desires and opinions rather than what Allah has commanded. No one who truly loves his fellow Muslims can be happy when they follow opinions or acts that he knows go against the Quran and sunnah. "Calling" to Islam is not some type of popularity contest. It is a matter of calling people to the way of Allah— the way that is pleasing to Allah, which may not necessarily be the same path that is pleasing to the masses.

- Innovations and heresies are from the greatest evils that exist among the Muslims. It is obligatory to repel evil according to one's ability. Allah willing, there is a great reward for doing so. Imam Ahmad was once asked, "Who is more beloved to you, a person who fasts, prays and secludes himself in the mosque or a person who speaks out against the innovators?" He answered, "If he fasts, prays and secludes himself in the mosque, that is for his own personal benefit. If he speaks out against the innovators, that is for the benefit of the Muslims as a whole and that is preferable."[1] Ibn Taimiya argues that such actions are like a form of jihad that is meant to defend the religion and preserve it.[2]

Summary of the Hadith

- A Muslim should never acquiesce to the presence of an evil. It is obligatory upon him to remove that evil whenever he has the ability to do so.
- If he can remove that evil with his hand, then he must do so.
- If he does not have the ability to remove the evil with his hand or removing it would lead to a greater evil, then he must try to remove the evil with his speech.
- If he is also not able to remove the evil with his speech, then he can only resort to removing the evil with his heart. That is the least manifestation of faith with respect to evil.

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[1] Quoted in ibn Taimiya, *Majmoo*, vol. 28, p. 131.

[2] Ibid.

Hadith #35
“Do Not Be Envious of One Another...”

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُوْلُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ
عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لا تَحَاسَدُوا وَلاَ تَنَاجَشُوا وَلاَ تَبَاغَضُوا وَلاَ
تَدَابَرُوا وَلاَ يَبِعْ بَعْضُكُمْ عَلَى بَيْعِ بَعْضٍ وَكُونُوا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ
إِخْوَانًا الْمُسْلِمُ أَخُو الْمُسْلِمِ لاَ يَظْلِمُهُ وَلاَ يَخْذُلُهُ وَلاَ
يَكْذِبُهُ وَلاَ يَحْقِرُهُ التَّقْوَى هَاهُنَا وَيُشِيرُ إِلَى صَدْرِهِ ثَلاَثَ
مَرَّاتٍ بِحَسْبِ امْرِئٍ مِنَ الشَّرِّ أَنْ يَحْقِرَ أَخَاهُ الْمُسْلِمَ كُلُّ
الْمُسْلِمِ عَلَى الْمُسْلِمِ حَرَامٌ دَمُهُ وَمَالُهُ وَعِرْضُه
رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ

On the authority of Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: The Messenger of Allah (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him) said, “Do not be envious of one another; do not artificially raise prices against one another; do not hate one another; do not turn one’s back on each other; and do not undercut one another in business transactions. And be, [O] servants of Allah, brethren. A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim. He does not wrong him. He does not fail him [when he needs him]. He does not lie to him. And he does not show contempt for him. Piety is here”— and he pointed to his chest three times. “It is enough of evil for a person to hold his brother Muslim in contempt. All of a Muslim is inviolable to another Muslim: his blood, his wealth and his honor.”
Recorded by Muslim.

Selected Vocabulary

تحاسدوا - “be envious of one another,” it is in the reciprocal form
تناجشوا - “inflate prices against one another,” see the discussion below
تباغضوا - “be angry with one another”

تدابروا	- literally, “turn your back to one another”
كونوا	- “be,” plural
عباد	- “servants,” plural of عبد (“servant, slave”)
إخوانا	- “brethren”
يظلمه	- “he wrongs him,” the ي at the beginning means it is the third person; the ه at the end represents, “him”
يخذله	- “he abandons, forsakes him”
يكذبه	- “he lies to him”
يحقره	- “he despises him, looks down upon him”
يشير	- “he points”
صدره	- “his chest”
مرّات	- “times”
بحسب	- “it suffices, it is sufficient, it is enough”
الشرّ	- “the evil”
دمه	- “his blood”
ماله	- “his wealth”
عرضه	- “his honor”

Takhreej

This hadith was recorded through many different chains, with slightly different wordings, from Abu Huraira. This particular wording is from the chain of Abu Saeed, the ex-slave of Aamir ibn Kuraiz, on the authority of Abu Huraira.[1] With this chain, it has been recorded by Muslim (as above), Ahmad, ibn Maajah and others.

With different wordings, this hadith or other hadith very close to it have been recorded from fifteen other narrators on the authority of Abu Huraira. Those hadith may be found in *Sahih Muslim*, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, *Musnad Ahmad* and many other works.

Similar hadith have also been narrated from other Companions, such as Abu Bakr, Anas and Waathilah. Those hadith can also be found in *Sahih al-Bukhari*, *Sahih Muslim* and numerous other hadith collections.[2]

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[1] Ali ibn al-Madeeni called Abu Saeed an “unknown narrator.” However, a number of narrators narrated hadith on his authority and his status is established. It is possible, as al-Haitami (*Fath*, p. 254) stated, that what Ali ibn al-Madeeni meant by that is that Abu Saeed’s name was not known, only his *kunyah* was known.

[2] Cf., ibn Muhammad, pp. 198-201. Ibn Muhammad simply mentions the chains and sources without giving the different texts of the hadith. Many of the different texts of the hadith may be found in ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, pp. 257-259. An extensive discussion of the different texts is found in Mashhoor Hasan Salmaan, *Al-Hajr fi al-Kitaab wa al-Sunnah Au Idhaat al-Shamoo fi Bayaan al-Hajr al-Mamnoo wa al-Mashroo* (Al-Dammam, Saudi Arabia: Daar ibn al-Qayyim, 1989), pp. 15-25.

General Comments About the Hadith

The brotherhood of Islam is not something simply theoretical or beyond the practical reach of humans.[1] Muslims have been commanded by Allah to treat each other as brethren. At the same time, though, Allah has guided Muslims to specific acts that engenders love and brotherhood. He has also prohibited Muslims specific acts that would injure that brotherhood in any fashion. This particular hadith is one very important example in which the steps to attaining true brotherhood are delineated by the Prophet (peace be upon him). If the Muslims were to apply the sublime teachings of this hadith, there would be a great change and improvement in their interrelationships and love for one another.

About the Narrator: Abu Huraira

Abu Huraira is discussed in the commentary to Hadith Number 9.

"Do not be envious of one another"

The Definition of *Hasad*

The word translated here as "envy" is *al-hasad* (الحسد). Ibn Rajab states that *hasad* is something that is firmly embedded in the nature of man. It is where a person hates to see anyone else being superior or better off than him.[2] That is all that ibn Rajab states as a definition of *hasad*. His definition is definitely not sufficient. The meaning of *hasad* is more general than what ibn Rajab stated.

Ibn al-Qayyim and al-Qaasimi, in his abridgment of al-Ghazzaali's *Ihyaa Uloom al-Deen*, have defined *hasad* as disliking a bounty that another has received and wishing that the other person would lose that bounty.[3] Al-Bugha and Mistu as well as Abdul Maalik al-Qaasim define it simply as the wishing that another person would lose a bounty that he possesses.[4] Al-Haitami defines *hasad* as a person wishing that another's bounty would be lost and wishing that he would get it himself.[1]

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[1] Marxist, Maoist and other philosophies try to create a "new man" who will give freely of worldly wealth to his brother humans. However, those man-made philosophies cannot possibly completely understand the true nature of man. Hence, they failed miserably in their attempts. Islam alone, coming from the Creator, contains the teachings necessary to lead to a true brotherhood of humans.

[2] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 260.

[3] Ibn al-Qayyim's statement may be found in Ali al-Saalihi, vol. 6, p. 525; Muhammad Jamaal al-Deen al-Qaasimi, *Mauidhat al-Mumineen min Ihyaa Uloom al-Deen* (Beirut: Daar al-Nafaais, 1994), p. 322.

[4] Al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 270; Abdul-Maalik al-Qaasim, *al-Hasad* (Riyadh: Daar al-Qaasim, 1418 A.H.), p. 4. However, on page 6, al-Qaasim gives the same definition as quoted from al-Qaasimi.

It seems that *hasad* is inclusive of a number of cases, some being worse in degree than others. It includes the case where a person dislikes that Allah should bestow a bounty upon somebody else, even if he himself has more of that same bounty. For example, Allah may have blessed a certain individual with a large amount of knowledge yet, at the same time, he hates it when Allah bestows any amount of knowledge upon others. This is *hasad*. It is not necessary that the person wishes that the bounty be removed from the other person or that he himself receives that bounty. It is sufficient to constitute *hasad* that he hates that the other person has even received the blessing in the first place.[2]

The Evils of *Hasad*

This disease of the heart and the sin which is known as *hasad* was one of the first sins ever committed. It was one of the main things that drove Satan away from his Lord. In fact, two aspects drove Satan to the horrendous situation that he is in today: pride and envy. Both of these terrible diseases are touched upon in this hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Satan was jealous and envious of Adam because of all of the special blessings that Allah gave Adam, including the fact that the angels and others at that time were ordered to prostrate to Adam and the fact that Adam was given knowledge that Satan was not given. Satan's response was the classic response of envy and arrogance. He felt that he was better than Adam and did not feel that Allah was right in giving such bounties to Adam. The following Quranic verse describes part of the situation:

قَالَ مَا مَنَعَكَ أَلَّا تَسْجُدَ إِذْ أَمَرْتُكَ قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْهُ خَلَقْتَنِى مِن نَّارٍ
وَخَلَقْتَهُۥ مِن طِينٍ

"[Allah] said, 'What kept you from prostrating when I ordered you?' He said, 'I am better than him. You created me from fire and You created him from clay'" (*al-Araaf* 12).

In addition, the people with whom Allah is displeased and those who have gone astray, the Jews and the Christians, are people of *hasad*. Hence, any time a Muslim has this characteristic, he is taking on one of the characteristics of the people whom Allah despises. Allah says in the Quran,

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[1] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 249.

[2] Cf., ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 4, p. 703.

وَدَّ كَثِيرٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِ ٱلْكِتَـٰبِ لَوْ يَرُدُّونَكُم مِّنۢ بَعْدِ إِيمَـٰنِكُمْ كُفَّارًا حَسَدًا
مِّنْ عِندِ أَنفُسِهِم مِّنۢ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمُ ٱلْحَقُّ

"Many of the People of the Book wish that they could turn you away as disbelievers after you have believed, out of envy from their own selves, even after the truth has been made clear to them" (*al-Baqara* 109). And another verse about the Jews and Christians reads,

أَمْ يَحْسُدُونَ ٱلنَّاسَ عَلَىٰ مَآ ءَاتَـٰهُمُ ٱللَّهُ مِن فَضْلِهِۦ

"Or do they envy men out of what Allah has given them of His bounty?" (*al-Nisaa* 54).

When *hasad* spreads among a people, it is very destructive. It strikes at the very core of the love and compassion that believers should have toward one another. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said concerning *hasad*,

دَبَّ إِلَيْكُمْ دَاءُ الأُمَمِ قَبْلَكُمُ الْحَسَدُ وَالْبَغْضَاءُ وَالْبَغْضَاءُ هِيَ الْحَالِقَةُ لا أَقُولُ تَحْلِقُ الشَّعْرَ وَلَكِنْ تَحْلِقُ الدِّينَ وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ أَوْ وَالَّذِي نَفْسُ مُحَمَّدٍ بِيَدِهِ لا تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ حَتَّى تُؤْمِنُوا وَلا تُؤْمِنُوا حَتَّى تَحَابُّوا أَفَلا أُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا يُثَبِّتُ ذَلِكَ لَكُمْ أَفْشُوا السَّلامَ بَيْنَكُمْ

"Creeping upon you is the disease of the peoples before you: envy and hatred. And the hatred is the thing that shaves. I do not say it shaves hair, but it shaves the religion. By the One in whose hand is my soul— or he said: by the One in whose hand is the soul of Muhammad— you will not enter Paradise until you believe. And you do not believe until you love one another. Certainly, let me inform you of that which will establish such for you: spreading the greetings (of peace) among yourselves."[1]

According to ibn Taimiya, *hasad* is always accompanied by hatred. This is one of the evils of *hasad*. First the person is envious of the other person. After some time, this envy develops into hatred.[2] Hatred toward other Muslims, as shown in this hadith, is also to be avoided.

Hasad may definitely lead to the breaking up of a Muslim community. This is because, in many cases, *hasad* is acted upon. In other words, the person hates the bounties others have received and he actively works to remove such bounties. For example, suppose someone wanted to be the Imam of a mosque but instead that job was given to somebody else. Now out of envy, the first person cannot stand that the other person got the job and he begins to do whatever he can to remove that other person from his position— even if he himself is not going to get that position. He begins to talk bad about the new Imam. He starts getting a group of people behind him who criticize everything the Imam does. Soon the whole community is split and fighting over the Imam and whether or not he should be kept in his position. This kind of action occurs in many circumstances, not just with the position of Imam. This is one of the ways by which *hasad* can truly destroy a community and lead to hatred among the Muslims.[1]

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[1] Recorded by Ahmad, with the above wording, and by al-Tirmidhi. After a lengthy discussion, al-Hilaali concludes that the hadith is *hasan*. See al-Hilaali, *Eeqaadh*, pp. 470-471.

[2] Ibn Taimiya, *Majmoo*, vol. 10, p. 127. Also see Ali al-Duhaami, *Al-Hath ala Salaamah al-Sadr* (Riyadh: Daar al-Watn, 1416 A.H.), pp. 38-39.

Allah has shown in the Quran how *hasad* can even penetrate what is recognized as one of the strongest bonds in this world, the blood relationship. Yes, *hasad* can even pit one blood brother against another. That demonstrates how dangerous and damaging this disease is. Allah shows two very clear examples of this nature in the Quran. About the two sons of Adam, Allah says,

وَٱتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ ٱبْنَىْ ءَادَمَ بِٱلْحَقِّ إِذْ قَرَّبَا قُرْبَانًا فَتُقُبِّلَ مِنْ أَحَدِهِمَا
وَلَمْ يُتَقَبَّلْ مِنَ ٱلْءَاخَرِ قَالَ لَأَقْتُلَنَّكَ ۖ قَالَ إِنَّمَا يَتَقَبَّلُ ٱللَّهُ مِنَ ٱلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾
لَئِنۢ بَسَطتَ إِلَىَّ يَدَكَ لِتَقْتُلَنِى مَآ أَنَا۠ بِبَاسِطٍ يَدِىَ إِلَيْكَ لِأَقْتُلَكَ ۖ إِنِّىٓ
أَخَافُ ٱللَّهَ رَبَّ ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾ إِنِّىٓ أُرِيدُ أَن تَبُوٓأَ بِإِثْمِى وَإِثْمِكَ فَتَكُونَ مِنْ
أَصْحَٰبِ ٱلنَّارِ ۚ وَذَٰلِكَ جَزَٰٓؤُا۟ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾ فَطَوَّعَتْ لَهُۥ نَفْسُهُۥ قَتْلَ أَخِيهِ
فَقَتَلَهُۥ فَأَصْبَحَ مِنَ ٱلْخَٰسِرِينَ

"And recite to them the story of the two sons of Adam (Cain and Abel) in truth. When each of them offered a sacrifice [to Allah], it was accepted from one of them but not from the other. The latter said to the former, 'I will surely kill you.' The former said, 'Verily, Allah accepts only from those who are pious. If you do stretch your hand to kill me, I shall never stretch my hand out to kill you, for I fear Allah, the Lord of the Worlds. Verily, I intend to let you draw my sin on yourself as well as yours. Then you will be one of the dwellers of the Fire, and that is the recompense of the wrongdoers.' So the soul of the other encouraged him and made fair-seeming to him the murder of his brother. So he murdered him and became one of the losers" (*al-Maaidah* 27-30). As ibn Katheer pointed out, it was mostly his envy for his brother, that his brother's sacrifice was accepted and his was not, that led him to that grievous deed of killing his own blood brother.[1]

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[1] Power and leadership are great trials from Allah. They are many times the downfall of otherwise righteous people. Some people want all the Islamic activity to be under their control and leadership. If others in the same community, not directly under their guidance, are doing some good work, they are not happy about it because they want all the good work to come from only themselves. Therefore, they start talking about the others and depreciating their good work. They claim that they are going against the "unity of the community" by not doing their good work under their leadership and control. This is a great disease that has afflicted many of the Muslim communities of the West. It must be recognized and cured by realizing that it is part of the evil *hasad* that the Prophet (peace be upon him) has warned about.

Allah also recounts the story of the brothers of Yusuf. They were also jealous and envious of their father's love for Yusuf. Therefore, they also plotted to do away with their own blood brother. Allah says,

إِذْ قَالُوا۟ لَيُوسُفُ وَأَخُوهُ أَحَبُّ إِلَىٰٓ أَبِينَا مِنَّا وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ إِنَّ أَبَانَا لَفِى
ضَلَٰلٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٨﴾ ٱقْتُلُوا۟ يُوسُفَ أَوِ ٱطْرَحُوهُ أَرْضًا يَخْلُ لَكُمْ وَجْهُ أَبِيكُمْ
وَتَكُونُوا۟ مِنۢ بَعْدِهِۦ قَوْمًا صَٰلِحِينَ ﴿٩﴾ قَالَ قَآئِلٌ مِّنْهُمْ لَا تَقْتُلُوا۟ يُوسُفَ
وَأَلْقُوهُ فِى غَيَٰبَتِ ٱلْجُبِّ يَلْتَقِطْهُ بَعْضُ ٱلسَّيَّارَةِ إِن كُنتُمْ فَٰعِلِينَ

"When they [the brothers of Yusuf] said, 'Truly, Yusuf and his brother are dearer to our father than we, while we are a strong group. Really, our father is in a plain error. Kill Yusuf or cast him out to some [other] land, so that the favor of our father may be given to you alone, and after that you will be righteous folk.' One from among them said, 'Kill not Yusuf, but if you must do something, throw him down to the bottom of a well. He will be picked up by some caravan of travelers'" (*Yoosuf* 8-10).

Hasad is a sign that a person's soul is evil and is far away from the level of *imaan* that it should achieve. The true believer must love for his brother what he loves for himself. He should be happy when his brother is blessed with something. This is virtually the exact opposite of *hasad*. In the case of *hasad*, one wishes for the things that Allah has bestowed upon others, while Allah has stated,

وَلَا تَتَمَنَّوْا۟ مَا فَضَّلَ ٱللَّهُ بِهِۦ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ ۚ لِّلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا
ٱكْتَسَبُوا۟ ۖ وَلِلنِّسَآءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا ٱكْتَسَبْنَ ۚ وَسْـَٔلُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ مِن فَضْلِهِۦٓ ۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ
كَانَ بِكُلِّ شَىْءٍ عَلِيمًا

"And wish not for the things in which Allah has made some of you to excel others. For men there is reward for what they have earned, and for women is reward for what they have earned. And ask Allah of His bounty. Surely, Allah is ever all-knower of everything" (*al-Nisaa* 32).

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[1] Ibn Katheer, *Tafseer*, vol. 2, p. 50.

Hasad is a kind of opposition or discontent with what Allah has decreed. After all, it is Allah who bestowed that bounty upon that other person. If a person dislikes what another person has received, then, in reality, he is showing his dislike for what Allah has decreed.[1] When he gets to that point, as ibn Uthaimeen stated, he is putting his religion into a dangerous and precarious position. He is practically declaring himself a better decision maker than Allah.[2]

Furthermore, the jealous person does not know why Allah has bestowed that blessing on the other person. Some people get jealous because they see people lying or cheating and then getting what they desire of this world. However, those "bounties" that Allah has given them may simply be the source of their own destruction— Allah gives them bounties and they continue to disobey Allah by lying, cheating and so forth. Therefore, their punishment will be much greater. Obviously, there is no reason to be jealous of such worldly gains whatsoever. One must leave the decrees and the decisions of this world to Allah and accept whatever Allah has decreed, for Allah is the All-Knowing, the Just, and the Merciful.

Furthermore, the person cannot change what Allah has decreed. In essence, he is fighting a losing battle. He cannot remove that blessing from the other person unless Allah decrees such a thing. However, it was Allah that decreed that the other person should receive that blessing. All his anxiety and stress will be in vain as everything is according to Allah's decree and Allah blesses whomsoever He wills.

Hasad also entails a number of negative psychological effects upon the jealous or envious person. As ibn Uthaimeen pointed out, the jealous person may always be in a state of anger and discontent over the bounties that others receive. This is because there is no limit to the number of bounties that Allah bestows upon others. The person may drive himself crazy or even kill himself if he always looks at the bounties others receive and he cannot live with them receiving such bounties.[1]

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[1] Allah has delegated specific roles for Muslim males and females. Especially in this day and age, with the advent of the feminist movement, many Muslim women seem to be jealous and envious of the role that Islam has given to men. Many of them do not seem to be happy that, in general, it is the man who is out in the workplace while the woman is at home (or, as some of them say, "Stuck at home with the children" while they want to "be like the men"). Many of them do not seem to be happy that the man has been given the responsibility of being the head of the household. They do not accept the fact that it is the husband's job to provide for and maintain the family, as well as lead the family. Such women must be careful because they must consider who their anger is directed to. Is it not Allah who created them as women instead of men? Is it not Allah who legislated the rights and responsibilities of both sexes? Do these women not think that Allah has done that based on wisdom and that Allah is merciful to all of His servants, male and female? However, what is important, and what is often times missing, is for the wife to be treated properly and correctly according to Islamic teachings.

[2] Ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 4, p. 704.

When one realizes all of the negative aspects of *hasad* and how it is clearly a sign that there is something wrong in a person's heart, especially a person who claims to be a Muslim or a believer, it is not surprising to know that, in reality, *hasad* and *imaan* cannot coexist in one heart. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

لا يَجْتَمِعَانِ فِي قَلْبِ عَبْدٍ الإِيمَانُ وَالْحَسَدُ

"*Imaan* and *hasad* do not gather together in the heart of a slave [of Allah]."[2]

A Sign That One has the Disease of *Hasad*

According to ibn Uthaimeen, one of the strong signs that a person is inflicted with the disease of *hasad* is that he always tries to conceal the virtues and goodness of others. He does not like it when others talk about the good that a person has done. He remains silent and pretends like he does not know of the good that the other one has done.[3] A true believer who is free of *hasad* likes it when good things are said about others and when the good deeds of others are appreciated and spoken about. He, himself, when he speaks about others always speaks about their good aspects and the wonderful bounties that Allah has bestowed on them. He has no envy in his heart for what Allah has bestowed upon the others and, therefore, he spreads that good news to others.[4]

This sign that ibn Uthaimeen has explicitly mentioned should be considered a type of subtle sign that people may not notice in themselves. They must take note of this sign and repel it as quickly as possible as it is a stepping stone to the greater forms of *hasad*.

The Different Categories of People with Respect to *Hasad*

With respect to that feeling of *hasad*, people can be divided into the following categories:

(1) There are some people who actively work to remove that bounty from the other person, without necessarily destroying the bounty itself. By their speech and their actions they will wrongly do whatever they can to bring an end to the other person's blessing from Allah.

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[1] Cf., ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 4, p. 704.

[2] Recorded by al-Nasaai. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 1262.

[3] Al-Duhaami points out that *hasad* is one of the greatest causes of backbiting. Not only does the person remain silent as to the other's good points, out of envy and hatred, he tries to put down the other person. See al-Duhaami, p. 39.

[4] Ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 4, p. 707.

(2) There are others who do not just seek to remove that bounty from the other person, but they also work to get the bounty for themselves.

(3) The worst are those who simply wish to destroy the bounty, regardless of whether they themselves get it or if it is simply destroyed. They only want to destroy that blessing because it was not given to them in the first place.

(4) There are those who cannot remove the feeling of envy from their souls. They cannot control it but they do not like it and wish they could remove it. Those people, Allah willing, are not sinful for their state that they cannot control. According to ibn al-Qayyim, the evil of *hasad* comes about when the person acts upon his *hasad*, even if just in his heart. This is why Allah guides the Muslims not to simply seek refuge of the envious one, but to seek refuge of the envious one when he is being envious. Allah says,

وَمِن شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ إِذَا حَسَدَ

"From the evil of the envious one when he envies" (*al-Falaq* 5).[1]

(5) There are also those who, although they do not act upon their *hasad*, willingly have thoughts of envy, are pleased with them and continue to think in such a manner while putting up no resistance to such evil thoughts as removing blessings from one's brother. This person is like a person who is dead set upon committing a sin. There is a difference of opinion among the scholars concerning whether this kind of person is a sinner or not.[2] Al-Haitami says that such a person is definitely a sinner.[3] Ibn Rajab, furthermore, points out that such a person is rarely safe from doing some wrong act against his brother out of spite and envy. Therefore, in the end, he may definitely become sinful in action, without question.[4]

(6) Another group of people recognize the *hasad* that exists within them. They do their best to remove that *hasad* from themselves and to treat the one they are envious of in the best possible fashion. They pray for the person; they tell others of his goodness and of the bounties that Allah has bestowed upon him. They remove that *hasad* to the extent that they love their Muslim brother and they love that Allah has blessed him and bestowed His bounties upon him. This category of people are among the people of the highest level of faith, they love for their brothers what they love for themselves.[5]

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[1] Quoted in al-Saalihi, vol. 6, p. 529.

[2] The discussion concerning that nature of the act will be taken up in greater detail in the commentary to Hadith Number 37.

[3] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 249.

[4] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 262.

[5] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 263.

Allah's Pleasure with One Who Frees Himself from *Hasad*

The following hadith demonstrates Allah's great pleasure with the one who frees himself from the disease of *hasad*. Imam Ahmad records in his *Musnad* that on three consecutive occasions the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated that the Companions were about to see a man from the inhabitants of Paradise. On each occasion, the same man entered upon them. Therefore, Abdullah ibn Amr decided to spend some time with that man to see what was the key to his being one of the people of Paradise. He told the man that he had a dispute with his father and vowed not to stay with him for three days. He asked the man if he would host him for three days. The man replied positively. During the three days, Abdullah did not notice anything special about his deeds; in particular, he did not even find him performing the late-night prayers. At the end of the three days, Abdullah was somewhat belittling to himself the man's actions. Therefore, he told the man what happened, that he did not actually argue with his father but that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had stated that he was a man from Paradise. So he asked him what must be the secret of the matter. The man told him, "All that I do is what you have seen." Then when Abdullah turned away, he called him back and said, "There is nothing other than what you have seen— but also I find in my soul no act of deception toward any Muslim nor do I have envy toward anyone for the blessings that Allah has bestowed upon him." Abdullah said, "This is what makes you reach [Paradise]."[1]

How to Free Oneself of the Disease or Effects of *Hasad*

The disease of *hasad* is very dangerous for one's religion and feelings of brotherhood. If a person has such a disease, he should do what he can to remove it. Taataay has suggested the following steps to help remove *hasad* from one's heart:

(1) The person should remind himself of the evil effects of *hasad*, both with respect to this life and the Hereafter. When he sees how it hurts his friendship and interaction with others—- how he cannot even approach them with a clean heart— he should realize that he is the person who is losing. When he thinks about how displeasing this quality is to Allah, that should also move him to try to purify himself from this disease.

(2) If the feeling of *hasad* comes to him, he should do whatever he can to repel it, whether that implies reading the Quran, performing a prayer and so forth.

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[1] Recorded by Ahmad. Sultaan says that according to al-Albaani, it is *hasan*. See Sultaan, p. 302. According to al-Haithami, the narrators in Ahmad's chain are narrators found in the *Sahih* collections. That is definitely the case and the hadith looks authentic. It also has supporting evidence in narrations by al-Bazzaar. See al-Darweesh, *Bughyat al-Raaid*, vol. 8, pp. 150-151; al-Haithami, *Kashf al-Astaar*, vol. 2, pp. 409-410; al-Banna, vol. 19, p. 237.

(3) At the very least, he should realize that if he does not act upon his *hasad* and limits it to just a thought in his mind that he cannot fight off, he may still remain sinless. Therefore, he must do whatever he can to keep himself from acting upon his feelings of *hasad*. Indeed, on the contrary, he should improve his actions toward the one that he has such feelings for. In this way, he might even earn Allah's pleasure.[1]

(4) In addition, the person should realize that the true bounties are the bounties of the Hereafter and not the bounties of this world. If he concentrates on those and works to achieve those, he will be preoccupied with greater bounties and he will not worry about what others are receiving of this world.

How to Behave Toward Those who Commit*Hasad*

This hadith is a very important hadith concerning the relationship between believers. In this portion of the hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated that Muslims should not be envious toward one another. There are some steps that can be taken when envy does appear. These steps can protect the person from the envy of others and may also help in removing that envy from society.[2]

When a person is afflicted and hurt by the envy of others, he should take the following steps:

(1) The person himself should repent to Allah and ask forgiveness for his own sins. In general, one's opponents and enemies will not get the better of him except due to the sins that he himself has committed. Allah says,

وَمَآ أَصَٰبَكُم مِّن مُّصِيبَةٖ فَبِمَا كَسَبَتۡ أَيۡدِيكُمۡ وَيَعۡفُواْ عَن كَثِيرٖ

"And whatever misfortune befalls you, it is because of what your hands have earned. And He pardons much" (*al-Shoora* 30).

(2) The person should put his trust in Allah. Whenever a person puts his trust in Allah, Allah suffices for him.

(3) He should seek refuge in Allah from the evil of the envious person. He should supplicate to and seek refuge in Allah as found in the next to last *soorah* of the Quran,

وَمِن شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ إِذَا حَسَدَ

"From the evil of the envious one when he envies" (*al-Falaq* 5).

(4) He should be just toward the envious one. He should not wrong the envious one and go beyond what is right in such a case.

(5) He should try to be nice and compassionate to the envious one. Envy is strongly related to hatred. When the envied one is very nice to the

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[1] Cf., Taataay, p. 296.

[2] A lengthier discussion of this topic by ibn al-Qayyim can be found in al-Saalihi, vol. 6, pp. 531-539. He gives ten causes that can save oneself from the evil of *hasad*.

envious person, the feeling of hatred and jealousy is slowly but surely removed, by the will of Allah.

What is Not Considered *Hasad*

To compete with one another in acts of righteousness and getting closer to Allah is not an aspect of the disease of *hasad*. This, in fact, is a praised action as everyone should be striving their best to do what is pleasing to Allah. Allah has said,

وَفِى ذَٰلِكَ فَلۡيَتَنَافَسِ ٱلۡمُتَنَٰفِسُونَ

"And for this let those who want to strive compete" (*al-Mutaffifeen* 26).

There are two important keys to this type of "healthy competition". The first key is that one wishes he has goodness and even excels other in goodness while, at the same time, he does not mind if others have the same goodness. In other words, there is no jealousy or envy involved. He is not hoping to remove what others have received nor does it make him unhappy that others have received such good. Indeed, if he is a true believer, he will be competing with others to please Allah while, at the same time, he will love that his brother is also doing what is pleasing to Allah.

The second key is that the competition is with respect to the Hereafter and not for the matters of this world. Competition with respect to this world is blameworthy. Allah has referred to such people in the Quran,

فَخَرَجَ عَلَىٰ قَوۡمِهِۦ فِى زِينَتِهِۦۖ قَالَ ٱلَّذِينَ يُرِيدُونَ ٱلۡحَيَوٰةَ ٱلدُّنۡيَا يَٰلَيۡتَ لَنَا
مِثۡلَ مَآ أُوتِىَ قَٰرُونُ إِنَّهُۥ لَذُو حَظٍّ عَظِيمٍ ۝٧٩ وَقَالَ ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُواْ ٱلۡعِلۡمَ
وَيۡلَكُمۡ ثَوَابُ ٱللَّهِ خَيۡرٌ لِّمَنۡ ءَامَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَٰلِحًا وَلَا يُلَقَّىٰهَآ إِلَّا
ٱلصَّٰبِرُونَ

"So he [Korah] went forth before his people in his pomp and luxury. Those who were desirous of the life of this world said, 'Ah, if only we had the like of what Korah has been given. Verily, he is the owner of a great fortune.' But those who had been given [religious] knowledge said, 'Woe to you! The reward of Allah [in the Hereafter] is better for those who believe and do righteous deeds. And none shall attain this [reward] except those who are patient [in following the truth]'" (*al-Qasas* 79-80).

Related to this topic, there is a hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) which may cause some confusion. It states,

لا حَسَدَ إِلاَّ فِي اثْنَتَيْنِ رَجُلٌ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ مَالاً فَسُلِّطَ عَلَى هَلَكَتِهِ فِي الْحَقِّ وَآخَرُ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ
حِكْمَةً فَهُوَ يَقْضِي بِهَا وَيُعَلِّمُهَا

"There is to be no *hasad* except with respect to two: a person to whom Allah has given wealth and he uses it up for the purposes of truth. And another man whom Allah has given wisdom and judges by it and teaches it." (Recorded by al-Bukhari.) In this hadith, though, the meaning of *hasad* is actually *al-ghabtah* الغبطة (where one wishes for what another has but does not wish that the blessing be removed from the other person). The word *hasad* has been used as a type of metaphor.[1]

"Do not artificially raise prices against one another"

In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated that one should not commit *al-najash* (النجش). Many scholars interpret it in the specific sense of *al-najash* in business dealings. This is where a person, neither the buyer nor the seller, bids up the price of an item. That person has no intention whatsoever of buying the item. He is either trying to raise the price in order to help the seller or he is doing it simply to hurt the buyer. The reason for its prohibition and its mention in this hadith seem to be clear. Instead of wishing for what is best for one's brother, one intentionally performs an act that is going to hurt him by robbing him of some of his wealth. This, obviously, injures the love and brotherhood that should exist among Muslims.

Ibn Abdul Barr stated that there is agreement that whoever knowingly performed such an act is a sinner.[2]

There is a difference of agreement among the scholars concerning a final sale whose price was driven up by someone not actually interested in buying the item. One narration from Ahmad states that such a sale is null and void. Others say that if the one who bid up the price was the seller or someone working in concert with the seller, then the sale is null and void. This is because one of the parties of the transaction himself was involved in the illegal act. However, if a third party independently drove up the price, then the sale is not nullified. This is one opinion that has been attributed to al-Shafi'ee. Again, as long as the seller was not among the guilty parties, there is no problem with the sale itself.

The majority of the jurists are of the opinion that the sale is valid regardless of whether the price was artificially bid up and regardless of who bid up the price. This opinion has been attributed to Abu Hanifah, Malik, al-Shafi'ee (a second attribution) and Ahmad. In other words, although the one who artificially drove up the price is a sinner— be he the seller, one working for the seller or a completely independent third party— the sale is still valid and enforceable.

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[1] Cf., ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 262.
[2] Quoted in ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 263.

The argument of these scholars is that as long as the essential aspects of a business transaction are met and the necessary qualities of the transaction are not violated, the transaction is going to be a valid transaction. In other words, if a problem occurs with an aspect that is not essential to the transaction itself, which is the case here where a third party drives up the price but the buyer still accepted the higher price, the transaction is not considered null and void— even if something improper took place.[1]

However, Ahmad and Malik give the buyer the opportunity to cancel the transaction if he was not aware of what was going on and if the increase in the price was a relatively great one. Malik and some of the followers of Ahmad set such a limit at one-third of the price. If the price had been driven up by 33%, the buyer has the right to cancel the transaction or, if he wishes, he may keep what he purchased.[2]

Ibn Uthaimeen states that there are three cases wherein one bids up the price of something. The first case is the prohibited case of *najash*, where one bids up the price although he has no intention to actually buy the item. The second case is where the person feels that something is being sold at a cheap price and he is willing to buy it for more than that. Therefore, he gives a higher bid. However, if the bidding continues and goes above what he would be interested in paying for the item, he stops his bidding. There is nothing wrong with this type of action. The third case is where he has an overriding interest in buying the item and, therefore, he continues to bid up the price until he outbids everyone else and buys the item. There is nothing wrong with this type of behavior either.[3]

A Second Interpretation

A second interpretation for this statement of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is a much more general interpretation, not restricted to artificially increasing the price in a business sale. Lexically speaking, the root of the word *najash* implies, "he concealed himself" as in hunting game.[4] In fact, it is from that root that the above artificial or deceitful increase of prices is called *najash*.

In this general understanding, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was saying, "Do not cheat, plot against or deceive one another." In other words, one should not try to bring about, through underhanded or deceptive means, any kind of harm to another Muslim. This includes every type of business transaction in which the seller knows that the buyer is going to be harmed or is being deceived in some manner. This kind of behavior is not allowed in general but it is particularly not allowed when dealing with one's brother Muslim.[1]

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[1] Cf., al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 250.

[2] Cf., ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, pp. 263-264.

[3] Cf., ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 4, pp. 708-709.

[4] Cf., Lane, vol. 2, p. 2771.

"Do not hate one another"

Muslims are prohibited from hating each other for any sake other than for the sake of Allah. Muslims are not allowed to hate each other simply due to their own personal desires. A Muslim also cannot hate another Muslim simply because he is from a particular country or his skin is of a particular color and so forth. All of that type of hatred is forbidden and goes against the brotherhood that Allah wants from His servants. Brothers should love each other and not hate each other.

It is clear from the Quran that one of the greatest blessings that Allah gives to the believers is the togetherness and love of the brotherhood of Islam. This is a very special bond. Allah brings the hearts of true believers together in a way that is superior and stronger than any other bond of this world. If the Muslims lose that feeling of brotherhood and strong bond of faith, they have lost a very important bounty.

Allah says in the Quran,

وَٱذۡكُرُواْ نِعۡمَتَ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيۡكُمۡ إِذۡ كُنتُمۡ أَعۡدَآءٗ فَأَلَّفَ بَيۡنَ قُلُوبِكُمۡ فَأَصۡبَحۡتُم
بِنِعۡمَتِهِۦٓ إِخۡوَٰنٗا وَكُنتُمۡ عَلَىٰ شَفَا حُفۡرَةٖ مِّنَ ٱلنَّارِ فَأَنقَذَكُم مِّنۡهَاۗ

"And remember Allah's favor upon you. You were enemies one to another but He joined your hearts together, so that, by His grace, you became brethren. And you were on a brink of a pit of fire and He saved you from it" (*ali-Imraan* 103). Allah also says,

وَأَلَّفَ بَيۡنَ قُلُوبِهِمۡۚ لَوۡ أَنفَقۡتَ مَا فِي ٱلۡأَرۡضِ جَمِيعٗا مَّآ أَلَّفۡتَ بَيۡنَ
قُلُوبِهِمۡ وَلَٰكِنَّ ٱللَّهَ أَلَّفَ بَيۡنَهُمۡۚ إِنَّهُۥ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٞ

"And He has united their [the believers'] hearts. If you [O Muhammad] had spent all that is in the earth, you could not have united their hearts. But it is Allah who has united them. Certainly, He is All-Mighty, All-Wise" (*al-Anfaal* 63).

One should never undervalue the importance of loving one another. In another hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

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[1] Cf., ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 264.

لا تَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ حَتَّى تُؤْمِنُوا وَلا تُؤْمِنُوا حَتَّى تَحَابُّوا أَوَلا أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَى شَيْءٍ إِذَا
فَعَلْتُمُوهُ تَحَابَبْتُمْ أَفْشُوا السَّلامَ بَيْنَكُم

"You will not enter Paradise until you believe. And you will not believe until you love one another. Certainly, I shall guide you to something that, if you do it, you will love one another: Spread the greetings (of peace) among yourselves." (Recorded by Muslim.)

Muslims are not allowed to hate each other. Therefore, they must also avoid any and all acts that may lead to them hating each other. They must show respect to each other and treat each other fairly. If they do not do so, they will begin to hate each other, which is prohibited in this hadith. Following all of the teachings of this hadith is a great step that will remove hatred and anger from among the Muslims.

Those who interact with each other a lot especially have to be careful about this matter. The more one deals with another, the easier it is to inadvertently do some things to get the other person upset. Furthermore, the more one deals with another, he may discover more characteristics about the other person that are not that pleasing. He should do his best to be patient and overlook a person's small mistakes or poor qualities and concentrate on his good deeds or good qualities. This is especially true with respect to a husband and wife, who have to deal with each other on a regular basis. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated,

لا يَفْرَكْ مُؤْمِنٌ مُؤْمِنَةً إِنْ كَرِهَ مِنْهَا خُلُقًا رَضِيَ مِنْهَا آخَرَ

"A believing man should not hate a believing woman. If he dislikes one characteristic in her, he is pleased with another." (Recorded by Muslim.)

Islam has taken the means to improve love among the believers, such as spreading the greetings of peace among them. It has also forbidden those acts that may lead to enmity and hatred among its adherents. For example, Allah has forbidden alcohol and gambling. Allah makes it clear that those are from the tools that Satan uses to cause hatred and enmity among humans. Allah says,

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ ٱلشَّيْطَٰنُ أَن يُوقِعَ بَيْنَكُمُ ٱلْعَدَٰوَةَ وَٱلْبَغْضَآءَ فِى ٱلْخَمْرِ
وَٱلْمَيْسِرِ وَيَصُدَّكُمْ عَن ذِكْرِ ٱللَّهِ وَعَنِ ٱلصَّلَوٰةِ ۖ فَهَلْ أَنتُم مُّنتَهُونَ

"Satan wants only to excite enmity and hatred among you with intoxicants and gambling, and to hinder you from the remembrance of Allah and from the prayer. So, will you not then abstain?" (*al-Maaidah* 91).

In the same way, Allah prohibits backbiting and tale-spreading and praises those who try to make peace and reconciliation among brothers and believers, as has been discussed under an earlier hadith. This is all part and parcel of the overall picture by which the teachings of Islam bring the hearts of the believers together and form a real— not theoretical— and strong brotherhood.

When is Hatred among Muslims Permissible?

This hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) does not mean that hatred, even among Muslims, is never permitted. One must do one's best to avoid hatred based on personal interests and motives. However, one must still love and hate for the sake of Allah. Indeed, this is one of the most important aspects of faith. As the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated,

مَنْ أَحَبَّ فِي اللَّهِ وَأَبْغَضَ فِي اللَّهِ وَأَعْطَى لِلَّهِ وَمَنَعَ لِلَّهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَكْمَلَ الإِيمَانَ

"The one who loves for the sake of Allah, hates for the sake of Allah, gives for the sake of Allah and withholds for the sake of Allah has completed the faith."[1]

In other words, if another Muslim commits some evil, then he should be hated for that evil. He is not hated completely, because he is still a Muslim and has some goodness in him, but he is hated to the extent of the evil that he commits. Similarly, when he does good deeds, he is loved for the good deeds that he does although overall he may have a lot of evil in him.

Some people ask: How is it possible to hate and love something or somebody at the same time? Ibn Uthaimeen responded to this question by giving the example of a medicine that smells and tastes bad. The person hates the medicine because of its taste but he likes it because he believes that, in the long run, it is going to be very good and helpful for him. Hence, he has combined both hatred and love for that medicine.[2]

Actually, if someone thinks about himself, he may understand this point better. Many people have aspects even about themselves that they hate, although as a whole they like themselves and the way they are. They say to themselves, "I hate it when I do that," "I don't know why I do such things," and so forth. Again, they have, in essence, combined the kind of love and hatred in themselves that one should combine for those Muslims who do evil.

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[1] Recorded by Abu Dawood. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih.* See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 1034.

[2] Ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 4, p. 710.

As ibn Uthaimeen pointed out, it is not allowed, though, for a Muslim to dislike his brother to the extent that he dislikes non-believers.[1] The greatest evil is *kufr* or disbelief and, therefore, that is what must be hated the most. Even if a Muslim should drink alcohol or do other forbidden acts, if he still has some faith and does some good deeds, his position is still better than the one who has completely refused to believe in and submit to Allah.

Another important point to note is that hating someone for the sake of Allah does not mean that one does not advise them or try to correct them. If a person is committing evil, one should still try to advise him and change his ways. Perhaps, Allah will guide that person through another who hates the evil deeds that he is performing.[2]

As this hadith shall soon allude to, true piety is in the hearts. It is, therefore, known only to Allah. Muslims must deal with each other on the basis of their outward acts. Umar ibn al-Khattaab once said, "Whoever of you shows us good deeds, we will suspect that he is good and will love him for that. And whoever of you shows us evil deeds, we will expect that he is evil and we will hate him for that. Your secret aspects are between you and your Lord."[3]

Al-Rabeeah ibn Khuthaim also said, "If you see a man who publicly shows good deeds and secretly does evil, you should love him [for what you know] and Allah will reward you for your loving of the good. And if you see a man who openly shows evil and hides his good deeds, then hate him [for what you know] and Allah will reward you for your hate of the evil."[4]

At the end of his discussion of this portion of the hadith, ibn Rajab adds some very important points. He says that when people begin to have different opinions regarding religious matters, they often times divide, hate and curse each other. All of them claim that they are hating for the sake of Allah. Sometimes they may be excused for what they are doing, while at other times they cannot be considered excused. This is because sometimes their hatred is based on their own personal likes and wants. They are following a certain scholar and they do not recognize that he could possibly be wrong. Hence, they hate everyone who opposes his opinion. In such a case, this hatred for the others is actually not for the sake of Allah and it is not correct according to the *shareeah*.[5]

"Do not turn one's back on each other"

The Arabic expert, Abu Ubaid stated that this phrase means, "Cutting off relations and boycotting. It is derived from a person turning his back to another and turning his face away from the other and cutting off of relations."[1] In fact, in another narration in *Sahih Muslim*, it says, "Do not cut off relations," instead of the phrase, "Do not turn one's back to each other."

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[1] Ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 4, p. 709.

[2] Cf., ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 4, p. 710.

[3] This was recorded by Ahmad and Abu Yala. Al-Hilaali (*Eeqaadh*, p. 476) says that its chain is "*hasan*, Allah willing."

[4] Quoted in ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 267.

[5] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 267.

Muslims should always be open to each other. They should always greet each other. When one is greeted by another, he should respond. Furthermore, they should try to greet each other with smiling faces. This is all part of the aspects of brotherhood of Islam. If a person refuses to do such or he does not behave in that fashion, he is working against the closeness that Islam is trying to bring about.

For this reason, a Muslim is not supposed to avoid or boycott his Muslim brother. If this is done for more than three days solely for the sake of worldly reasons or personal likes and dislikes, it is prohibited. Another hadith in *al-Bukhari* and *Muslim* states,

لا يَحِلُّ لِرَجُلٍ أَنْ يَهْجُرَ أَخَاهُ فَوْقَ ثَلاثِ لَيَالٍ يَلْتَقِيَانِ فَيُعْرِضُ هَذَا وَيُعْرِضُ هَذَا
وَخَيْرُهُمَا الَّذِي يَبْدَأُ بِالسَّلامِ

"It is not allowed for a man to boycott his brother for more than three nights, when they meet this one turns away and the other turns away. The best of them is the one who is the first to offer the greetings."

In another hadith, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

مَنْ هَجَرَ أَخَاهُ سَنَةً فَهُوَ كَسَفْكِ دَمِهِ

"The one who boycotts his brother for a year is like one who has spilled his [his brother's] blood."[2]

When a Muslim finds himself in this kind of situation with respect to another Muslim, he should realize his mistake and do his best to remedy the situation. One way of remedying the situation is by going to the other person and giving him the greetings of peace. According to some scholars, this is sufficient to bring an end to the prohibited form of boycotting. However, according to other scholars, such as Imam Malik, if these two had a strong bond and friendship before the boycotting, the boycotting does not end simply by greeting each other. Instead, they must return to their old state of being good friends with one another. Others say that if the person were a stranger, it is sufficient to greet him to bring an end to the boycotting. But if he were a relative, then one must once again have good ties with him as otherwise the boycott would not be considered completely finished.[1]

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[1] Quoted in ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 268.

[2] Recorded by Ahmad, Abu Dawood, al-Haakim and others. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 1120. According to Salmaan (*al-Hajr*, p. 123), the meaning of this hadith is that the one who boycotts his brother for one year is deserving of punishment in the same way that one who spills his blood is deserving punishment. This emphasizes how great the sin is, although it does not mean to imply that the punishment for the two acts are the same.

Permissible Forms of "Boycotting"

As was the case with having hatred toward another Muslim, there are also other forms of boycotting which are considered permissible or sanctioned by the *shareeah.* In general, this boycotting takes place when Allah's rights are violated and not just the rights of individuals. In fact, these forms of boycotting may go well beyond the three days mentioned in the above hadith. They may go on for as long as it takes to remedy the situation.[2]

The source for this kind of boycotting is found in the hadith of Kaab ibn Maalik and the other two who failed to partake in the battle of Tabook. The Prophet (peace be upon him) feared for them as they committed an act that was akin to an act of hypocrisy. They were ordered to be boycotted for months and their greetings were not even responded to. Finally, Allah accepted their repentance and the Muslims returned to their old behavior with them.[3]

This kind of boycotting is done for a purpose that is approved of by the *shareeah.* Its overriding goal is either to correct another person's behavior or to demonstrate disapproval with another person's behavior or beliefs. Sometimes mere advice and counseling are not sufficient to change a person. More drastic measures are sometimes needed to keep a person from doing some wrong or to make him realize the wrong that he has committed. It is in cases like these that boycotting may be resorted to.

This boycotting is considered a type of punishment. It is also a kind of jihad for the sake of Allah. This is because its actual purpose is to make the Word of Allah supreme and dominant.[4] Its benefit accrues to those who are doing the boycotting, as they remain away from evil and the doers of evil, as well as the one who is boycotted, as he may be coerced into changing his evil ways. Muslim society as a whole benefits as it is a means to control the spread of evil and heresies.[5]

Ibn Taimiya stated that if a person openly commits an evil, such as drinking alcohol, lewd acts and transgression against others, he must be repelled or told to stop his evil. He may openly be opposed to stop his evil. This includes an open boycott of the person wherein he is neither greeted nor is his greeting responded to. Even after such a person dies, if he did not repent, the pious people may or should avoid him, in order to send a message to others who do such evil deeds. The pious people should refuse to perform the funeral prayer for such publicly impious people.[1]

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[1] Cf., ibn Rajab, *Jaami,* vol. 2, pp. 269-270.

[2] Al-Suyooti gives numerous examples of the Companions and later scholars boycotting others for the wrong that they did. See Jalaal al-Deen al-Suyooti, *Hujraan Ahl al-Bidah* (Riyadh: Daar al-Salafiyah li-l-Nashr wa al-Tauzee, 1995), pp. 25-60.

[3] This lengthy hadith may be found in Siddiqi, trans., *Sahih Muslim,* vol. 4, pp. 1445-1450.

[4] Cf., Ahmad ibn Taimiya, *Al-Hajr al-Shari: Ma Yuhill minhu wa ma Yuharram* (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Tabariyyah, 1992), pp. 15-16.

[5] Cf., Bakr Abu Zaid, *Hajr al-Mubtada* (al-Damaam, Saudi Arabia: Maktaba ibn al-Jauzi, 1410 A.H.), p. 11.

In particular, in the past, this approach of correction was used with respect to the heretics and those who followed innovations. Abu Zaid points out that the scholars would not accept their narrations, their witness, pray behind them, pray for them or give them a position of authority. Indeed, they would warn others about their innovations and heresies.[2]

It is very important to realize that this type of boycotting is only to be resorted to when it is judged that its benefits will be greater than any harm that may come about due to it. Ibn Taimiya stated that if the boycotting leads to a lessening of evil or a reformation in certain people, then it may be resorted to. But if the people who are following what is correct are small in number or power and their boycotting of others will not bring about any positive results, then boycotting is not to be resorted to.[3] Similarly, if the boycotting may lead to greater harm, such as what could happen in the Western countries where a Muslim who is boycotted may be driven to be with the disbelievers, it should not be resorted to. Furthermore, if the "*ahl al-sunnah*" (Sunnis) themselves do not make a united front and all boycott the one who is to be boycotted, the results will be disastrous as there will be no benefit from the boycotting and the community may become divided due to the attempt at boycotting. Hence, it cannot be resorted to in that case either.

There is another form of boycotting which is approved by the *shareeah*. This is where the husband boycotts his recalcitrant wife. This is based on the Quranic verse,

وَٱلَّٰتِى تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَٱهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِى ٱلْمَضَاجِعِ

"As to those women on whose part you see ill-conduct (*al-nushooz*), admonish them (first), then refuse to share their beds…" (*al-Nisaa* 34).

Al-Sadlaan wrote,

> Boycotting is a kind of disciplining for the woman who loves her husband and cannot put up with his avoidance of her.
>
> The proper way that this is to be carried out is not that the man avoids the bed itself or that he avoids the bedroom that contains the bed that they would usually sleep in. Instead, he avoids her while they are both in the bed itself. Being together in the bed is what incites the marital feelings and both partners have solace in one another. In this way, the disturbances that

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[1] Ibn Taimiya, *al-Hajr*, pp. 25-26.

[2] Abu Zaid, *Hajr*, p. 8.

[3] Cf., ibn Taimiya, *Al-Hajr*, pp. 11-12.

they were feeling before may be removed. Therefore, when the man avoids her and turns away from her in that setting, this may lead the wife to ask about the reason for the action. It will take her from being a recalcitrant wife to one who wishes to be in agreement with her husband. Therefore, avoiding her and turning away from her while in the bed is in response to her obstinate behavior and rebellion. Note that it is avoidance in the bed itself and not avoidance from the bed. Furthermore, it is avoidance in the bed and not avoidance in the house or in front of the family, children and so forth.

The purpose of that act is to solve the problem. The purpose is not to make the problem well-known or to belittle the woman or uncover the secrets that are going on. However, it is a reaction to her act of *nushooz* and recalcitrance by avoiding her and turning away from her in hopes that this will lead to reciprocity and togetherness.[1]

"Do not undercut one another in business transactions."

This particular command of the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been stated in a number of hadith. For example, another hadith found in *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim* states,

نَهَى رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنْ يَبِيعَ حَاضِرٌ لِبَادٍ وَلا تَنَاجَشُوا وَلا يَبِيعُ الرَّجُلُ عَلَى بَيْعِ أَخِيهِ وَلا يَخْطُبُ عَلَى خِطْبَةِ أَخِيهِ وَلا تَسْأَلُ الْمَرْأَةُ طَلاقَ أُخْتِهَا لِتَكْفَأَ مَا فِي إِنَائِهَا

"The Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade the city dweller from selling on behalf of a bedouin. And there is to be no *najash.* One also should not undercut others in business transactions. A man should not make a proposal against the proposal of his brother.[2] A woman should not ask that her sister be divorced in order to take her place."

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[1] Saalih al-Sadlaan, *Marital Discord* (Boulder, CO: Al-Basheer Company for Publications and Translations, 1996), p. 41. For more details about this type of "boycotting," also see pp. 40-43 of the same work and Salmaan, *al-Hajr*, pp. 203-214.

[2] This portion of the hadith is greatly misunderstood by many people. They believe that if a brother proposes to a sister, she cannot be proposed to by any other brother nor has she the right to think about any other man until she gives her response to the first man. This is not correct. She may be proposed to by more than one man, as happened during the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him), and she may choose whichever of them she prefers. What is not allowed is for a brother to propose to a sister after she was proposed to by somebody else and had accepted that other person's proposal. In general, once the sister has accepted the proposal, no other man should try to come in between the two. For a discussion of this point and all of its various details,

In these hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) specifically referred to doing such acts against "one's brother." This has led some scholars, such as Ahmad and al-Auzaai, to understand that this is a special right of the Muslim brotherhood. In other words, there is no harm in making a proposal against a non-Muslim's proposal or in undercutting a non-Muslim's business deal. However, many jurists, such as al-Nawawi[1], are of the opinion that the meaning is actual general and that such acts should also not be done against a non-believer.[2] To this author it seems that such behavior should neither be done toward a Muslim or a non-Muslim. However, its evil is much greater when it is done toward a person who one claims to be his brother as opposed to when it is done toward one for whom there is no such ties of brotherhood.

Economic well-being is very dear to people. In *ali-Imraan* verse 14, Allah makes it clear that wealth is very beloved to man. Therefore, it can also be one of the greatest causes of problems and disputes among humans. Even just a few dollars here or there can cause people to fight and argue with each other. In the interest of true brotherhood, steps must be taken to ensure that people do not harm other's material interest. One of the important ways is what is described in this particular hadith.

Specifically, this hadith is referring to and prohibiting the following types of actions between brothers:

A buys a piece of merchandise from B for $100. Then C comes to A and says, "I can sell you the same one for $80," or he says, "I can sell you a better quality one for the same price." Because of this offer from C, A goes back to B and returns the merchandise and instead buys it from C. This kind of behavior would most likely be hated and harmful to B. It may cause hatred between B and both A and C. Therefore, it is not allowed.

Another example includes the following: A sells a piece of merchandise to B for $100. Then C comes to A and says, "I will buy it from you for $120." Therefore, A nullifies his agreement with B and sells it to C instead. This would have the same negative effects on the parties involved as just described.

Another important question is related to the timing of the above type of interference by C. In other words, is it just referring to the time period in which one has the option to return his merchandise? This is the opinion of some scholars, such as one narration from Ahmad. The argument of those scholars is that once that time has passed, the buyer can no longer cancel the agreement. Therefore, C cannot really have any effect in that case and there is no harm in what he does.

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see Abdul Rahmaan Itr, *Khitbah al-Nikaah* (Al-Zarqaa, Jordan: Maktabah al-Manaar, 1985), pp. 133-173.

[1] Al-Nawawi, *Sharh Matn*, p. 132.

[2] Cf., ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 270.

Ibn Uthaimeen argues that the meaning is more general than that. Even after the option period has expired, it is not allowed for a third party to give a better offer to the buyer or seller, as in the respective examples given above. His argument is that, although the time of option has expired, the person who has received the new offer will try to find any "legal" excuse to cancel the first contract. A buyer, for example, may try to spot any type of defect in the merchandise so he can have an excuse to return the item. Then he will buy the item from the one who gave him the new lower offer. In any case, says ibn Uthaimeen, even if he cannot do that, he will feel sorry for the purchase he made and he may even become angered at the one who sold him the item at too high of a price. Therefore, even after the period of option has expired, one must avoid such behavior. However, ibn Uthaimeen states, if the time period between the original purchase and new offer was a long one, then there is no harm in offering the person a better deal as there is nothing that he can do about the first contract.[1] Furthermore, prices change over time and there would be no reason for the buyer or seller to be upset about his past purchase which may have been at the going price at the time.

Some scholars, in particular some Hanbalis, state that the prohibition mentioned in this hadith is one of disapproval and not of strict prohibition. However, ibn Rajab, himself a Hanbali, stated that the correct opinion is the opinion of the majority of the scholars that what is meant here is strict prohibition and not simply disapproval.[2]

The Validity of Such a Business Transaction

There is no question that such an act as undercutting one's brother is morally wrong and the one who does that is a sinner. However, that in itself does not necessarily imply that such a business transaction is null and void. In fact, the scholars have differed over this question.

According to Abu Hanifah, al-Shafi'ee and the majority of the Hanbalis, the second business transaction wherein a Muslim undercut his brother, as in the examples given above, is valid. There is one narration, however, from Ahmad that states that it is null and void.[3]

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[1] Cf., ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 4, pp. 714-716.

[2] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 271.

[3] Cf., ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 271. Incidentally, they have similar opinions concerning the case where one Muslim proposes against his brother and the woman changes her mind and accepts the second proposal. Malik, though, stated that if the two should get married and the marriage had not yet been consummated, then the marriage should be annulled and the woman taken back to the first one she was engaged to. (See ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 271.)

Ethics and Business Dealings in Islam

This hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) demonstrates the emphasis that the teachings of Islam give to business transactions. Business dealings in Islam are not simply a matter of getting ahead in this world. They are not cutthroat competition or taking advantage of others. Instead, they are based on a very strong ethical basis. A Muslim realizes that every business transaction is a question of morals and ethics.

Business transactions are an essential aspect of any developed society. The Prophet (peace be upon him) gave a great deal of guidance concerning business transactions. Muslims must heed this guidance. This guidance will, Allah willing, go a great way in removing many problems and feelings of hatred that are the result of unjust or improper business practices. Furthermore, the feeling of brotherhood— loving for one's brother what one loves for oneself— should permeate all business transactions. How can brothers be considered true brothers to one another when they are willing to cheat each other or lie to each other simply for the sake of the dollar?

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

رَحِمَ اللَّهُ رَجُلاً سَمْحًا إِذَا بَاعَ وَإِذَا اشْتَرَى وَإِذَا اقْتَضَى

"May Allah have mercy on the one who is easy-going and generous while buying, while selling and when demanding his rights." (Recorded by al-Bukhari.)

One time the Prophet (peace be upon him) was in the marketplace and he put his hand into a pile of grains and he found that it was wet on the bottom. He asked the vendor about it and the man told him that rain had fallen upon it. So the Prophet (peace be upon him) told him,

أَفَلاَ جَعَلْتَهُ فَوْقَ الطَّعَامِ كَيْ يَرَاهُ النَّاسُ مَنْ غَشَّ فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي

"Why did you not put it on top of the grain so people could see it? Whoever deceives is not from me." (Recorded by Muslim.)

Ibn Maajah records that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said in another hadith stressing the aspect of brotherhood and its relation to business dealings,

الْمُسْلِمُ أَخُو الْمُسْلِمِ لا يَحِلُّ لِمُسْلِمٍ بَاعَ مِنْ أَخِيهِ بَيْعًا فِيهِ عَيْبٌ إِلاَّ بَيَّنَهُ لَهُ

"A Muslim is a brother to a Muslim. It is not permissible for a Muslim to sell something defective to his brother without making that [defect] clear to him."[1]

In fact, the key to blessed business transactions, in which both parties please Allah and receive blessings, is honesty and straightforwardness. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

الْبَيِّعَانِ بِالْخِيَارِ مَا لَمْ يَتَفَرَّقَا أَوْ قَالَ حَتَّى يَتَفَرَّقَا فَإِنْ صَدَقَا وَبَيَّنَا بُورِكَ لَهُمَا فِي بَيْعِهِمَا
وَإِنْ كَتَمَا وَكَذَبَا مُحِقَتْ بَرَكَةُ بَيْعِهِمَا

"The buyer and seller have the right of option as long as they do not part from one another. If they were honest and clear, they would be blessed in their transaction. If they concealed facts and lied, the blessings of their transaction would be destroyed." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

If a person is ethical and morally conscious in his business dealings, this is a good sign that he is preferring the Hereafter to this world. He is not willing to risk Allah's punishment and anger for a measly gain. He is also strengthening the trust among the Muslim brethren. Allah willing, his reward with Allah will be great.

"And be, [O][2] servants of Allah, brethren."

The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated the whole point of all of the above instructions: "You should be brothers one to another, treating each other with respect, without hatred and without working against each other in any way." This is the way a Muslim should think of himself. He should think of himself as a member of a great brotherhood. This brotherhood is made up of the servants of Allah. The only goal of this brotherhood should be to serve and worship Allah. There is no need for— indeed, there is no room for— working against one another and trying to get ahead of each other in this worldly realm. The goal is to please and serve Allah. And that goal is partially met by treating each other properly and being brothers for the sake of Allah. This goal can be met, by the will of Allah, when Muslims stop envying each other, stop hating each other, stop boycotting one another and stop working against one another just to get ahead in this world.

One can understand from this statement of the Prophet (peace be upon him) that Muslims must be with respect to one another as a single brotherhood. Allah has stated,

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[1] Recorded by ibn Maajah. Ahmad and al-Haakim have something similar. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 1136.

[2] The, "O," is not explicitly stated in the text but it is understood or implied. See al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 251; al-Mudaabaghi, p. 251.

إِنَّمَا ٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ

"Verily, the believers are but a brotherhood" (*al-Hujuraat* 10). Anything that works against this feeling of brotherhood, should be avoided. Anything that improves this feeling of brotherhood and strengthens the ties among the believers should be promoted.

Before any believer performs an act, he should think about how that act is going to affect his brothers. If he feels that it is going to be harmful to his brothers and the feeling of brotherhood among them, he should avoid that act—unless it is something called for by the *shareeah*, such as ordering good although it may hurt others' feelings.

In the remainder of this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) mentioned some specific acts that Muslims should always avoid with respect to their brothers and sisters. Indeed, these acts strike at the very foundation of true brotherhood. In other words, it is inconceivable that true brothers would do such acts toward one another.

A Second Interpretation

If one does not assume the word, "O," the meaning is, "You should be servants of Allah, brethren." In this case, the meaning of the first part is that Muslims should be true servants of Allah by obeying His commands, fulfilling what He obliges and remaining away from what He forbids. Muslims must both be servants of Allah as well as brethren to one another.[1]

This second interpretation cannot be considered as likely as the first interpretation. This is because, grammatically speaking, the construct of the sentence becomes somewhat awkward. One has definite words, "servants of Allah," coupled with an indefinite word, "brethren." This is not the common form of speech.

However, according to either interpretation, it is true that these two characteristics must permeate a Muslim's soul and drive his life. First, he is a servant and worshipper of Allah. He tries his best to do only those things that are permissible according to Allah's law. Second, he is a brother to his fellow Muslims. He takes their feelings into consideration before any action that he takes. These two characteristics, serving Allah and being a brother to the other Muslims, control his behavior in every aspect of his life.

"A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim."

Before mentioning the acts that should be avoided, the Prophet (peace be upon him) began with this preface or introduction. This is a general statement of the Prophet (peace be upon him). It means that every Muslim is a brother to every other Muslim. Regardless of a Muslim's nationality, race, skin color and so forth, one is part and parcel of this Muslim brotherhood. He must be treated as part of the Muslim brotherhood. If the other Muslims do not treat him as such simply because of these non-consequential matters, they are sinning and they are wronging their brother in Islam.

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[1] Cf., al-Sindi, *Sharh al-Arbaeen*, p. 107.

If a Muslim follows any of the accepted schools of fiqh or works for any of the groups that are working for Islam— and that fall within the realm of Islam and not in the realm of *kufr*— he is a brother to all other Muslims. For example, whether a person is a Maliki, Hanafi, Hanbali or Shafi'ee, he is a brother to all other Muslims. He must treat all other Muslims as his brothers and they must treat him as their brother.

As stated before, the level of love and loyalty toward one another will be determined by one's righteousness and apparent good deeds. If a person is demonstrating good deeds and is free of any form of heresy, he is deserving complete loyalty and love. If a person is lacking in those areas, the love and loyalty toward him should be lacking in a corresponding manner. However, as long as the person does not fall out of the fold of Islam, he is still a brother in Islam and he is still deserving of specific rights of brotherhood.

Again, all Muslims are brothers one to another. Therefore, they must treat each other as brothers. They must do good to each other and try their best to keep harm from one another. In particular, they must be wary of specific actions that may break the brotherhood apart. Some of those actions are mentioned by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in this hadith as below.

"He does not wrong him."

The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated that a Muslim would not commit *dhulm* toward his brother. The concept of *dhulm* was discussed in detail in the commentary to Hadith Number 24. *Dhulm* is forbidden even with respect to non-Muslims. The question here is: How can one consider himself a brother to another when he is wronging him, oppressing him or cheating him? Would a brother intentionally harm his brother? Is it conceivable that true brothers would act this way toward one another? The Prophet (peace be upon him) has clearly shown here that such behavior cannot be expected between brothers. If two Muslims want to be true brothers to each other, they must do their best not to cause any *dhulm* toward one another.

When *dhulm* is committed it easily leads to hatred. A pious person may be able to be patient and accept another person's *dhulm*. However, if people who are not of the highest level of piety are involved or if too much *dhulm* is committed toward a pious person, many times *dhulm* will lead to retaliation and more harm to the members of society.

If *dhulm* is committed on a large scale, for example, between classes or one group of people and another, it can lead to a great deal of hatred and even, as is seen historically, civil strife. People who are constantly wronged and oppressed by others may finally revolt against the wrongdoers, even if they are of the same religion. A Muslim society should be free of such massive *dhulm*; and Muslims should also be free of such *dhulm* at an individual level.

"He does not fail him [when he needs him]."

In general, one thinks of a brother as someone he can rely upon in times of need. When a person deserts another in his time of need, he is demonstrating that he is, in reality, not a friend, not to speak of a close brother.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) has required Muslim brothers to help and assist each other. In one hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated,

انْصُرْ أَخَاكَ ظَالِمًا أَوْ مَظْلُومًا قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ هَذَا نَنْصُرُهُ مَظْلُومًا فَكَيْفَ نَنْصُرُهُ
ظَالِمًا قَالَ تَأْخُذُ فَوْقَ يَدَيْهِ

"Help your brother, whether he is the one doing wrong or the one being wronged." They said, "O Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), we know how to help him if he is being wronged, but how do we help him if he is the one doing the wrong?" He answered, "Take him by his hand." (Recorded by al-Bukhari.) In other words, as stated in another narration, keep him from his wrongdoing and that is how you help him.

Allah orders Muslims to help each other in whatever is sanctioned by the *shareeah*. Allah says,

وَتَعَاوَنُواْ عَلَى ٱلْبِرِّ وَٱلتَّقْوَىٰ ۖ

"Help one another in acts of righteousness and piety" (*al-Maaidah* 2). Allah has also said about those who did not migrate to Madinah but who were still Muslims,

وَإِنِ ٱسْتَنصَرُوكُمْ فِى ٱلدِّينِ فَعَلَيْكُمُ ٱلنَّصْرُ إِلَّا عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍۭ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُم
مِّيثَٰقٌ ۗ

"But if they seek your help in religion, it is your duty to help them— unless it be against a people with whom you have a pact" (*al-Anfaal* 72).

Furthermore, as the next hadith in this collection shall demonstrate, if a Muslim helps his brother, Allah will help him.

Therefore, a necessary aspect of this brotherhood is mutual support, aid and assistance. When a Muslim's brother is being oppressed or fought, he comes to his aid and assistance with his wealth and soul, if possible. This is described, for example, in the following verses:

وَمَا لَكُمْ لَا تُقَٰتِلُونَ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ وَٱلْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ ٱلرِّجَالِ وَٱلنِّسَآءِ
وَٱلْوِلْدَٰنِ ٱلَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَآ أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْ هَٰذِهِ ٱلْقَرْيَةِ ٱلظَّالِمِ أَهْلُهَا
وَٱجْعَل لَّنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ وَلِيًّا وَٱجْعَل لَّنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ نَصِيرًا

“And what is wrong with you that you fight not in the Cause of Allah, and for those weak, ill-treated and oppressed among men, women and children, whose cry is, ‘Our Lord! Rescue us from this town whose people are oppressors, and raise for us from You one who will protect, and raise for us from You one who will help’” (*al-Nisaa* 75).

This verse makes it clear that Muslims are to be blamed if they do not fight on behalf of their Muslim brothers and sisters who are oppressed and in need. They are crying out to Allah for help and Allah makes it clear that it is the other Muslims who are the ones that should come to their aid and assistance. This is all part of the obligation upon Muslims when they enter in this great brotherhood of Islam.

Today, it is very sad that sometimes Muslims witness their brothers in different parts of the Muslim world being killed and tortured yet their hearts are dead. And even if there is some life left in the hearts, it is not enough to stir one to actions. And, unfortunately, even if it is enough to stir one to action, it is usually not enough to stir one to the actions that one is supposed to do; that is, it is not enough to drive a Muslim to sacrifice on behalf of his brothers in the manner that he is supposed to do, in the manner that is their right as being part of this Muslim brotherhood.

If one Muslim is killed anywhere in the world, a Muslim must, at the very least, feel it in his heart and have some sorrow for his Muslim brothers. If he does not feel at least that much, then he should question his *imaan.*

But if one’s *imaan* is strong, as all wish it to be, then he would do more than just feel sorrow for his brothers in need. Instead, he would work and sacrifice for their sake— even if it means that he will have to give up and sacrifice something from his life. This is the characteristic of the true believers. This is how Allah described the first generation of believers, the true believers whose behavior Allah has praised over and over throughout the Quran,

وَٱلَّذِينَ تَبَوَّءُو ٱلدَّارَ وَٱلْإِيمَٰنَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ يُحِبُّونَ مَنْ هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَا
يَجِدُونَ فِى صُدُورِهِمْ حَاجَةً مِّمَّآ أُوتُوا۟ وَيُؤْثِرُونَ عَلَىٰٓ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ
بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ ۚ وَمَن يُوقَ شُحَّ نَفْسِهِۦ فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْمُفْلِحُونَ

"But those [Ansaar] who, before them, had homes [in Madinah] and had adopted the Faith— they love those who emigrate to them, and have no jealousy in their breasts for that which that have been given [from the booty], but they [the Ansaar] give them [the Emigrants] preference over themselves, even though they were in need of that. And whosoever is saved from his own covetousness, such are they who will be the successful" (*al-Hashr* 9).

At the very least, if a Muslim does not have the wealth or means to assist his brothers who are in need, then he should pray (make *dua*) for them. In fact, he should try to seek the best times to make *dua* for his brothers in need, pleading to Allah to help them in their situation. This is one of the characteristics of brotherhood. But how many people actually get up in the middle of the night, for example, with the intention of praying to Allah and making a special prayer at that special time for the sake of his brothers and sisters who are in need? Even that little bit, it seems, the Muslim of today cannot do for his brethren throughout the world who are greatly in need of his *dua* and help.

Even more amazing is that if a person does that for his brother, then Allah will grant his *dua* for himself also. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

مَا مِنْ عَبْدٍ مُسْلِمٍ يَدْعُو لأَخِيهِ بِظَهْرِ الْغَيْبِ إِلاَّ قَالَ الْمَلَكُ وَلَكَ بِمِثْلٍ

"No Muslim servant [of Allah] prays for his brother behind his back except that an angel says, 'And for you the same.'" (Recorded by Muslim.)

Brothers should pray for each other. In particular, they should all pray that they are forgiven by Allah for their sins. This should flow from their hearts when they are true brethren. This true feeling or result of true brotherhood and love for one another is rewarded by Allah in a very special way. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

مَنِ اسْتَغْفَرَ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَهُ بِكُلِّ مُؤْمِنٍ وَمُؤْمِنَةٍ حَسَنَةً

"For whoever seeks forgiveness for the believing men and women, Allah will record one good deed corresponding to every believing man and woman."[1]

This help and support of one's brother in Islam does not necessarily have to be with respect to some physical or material aspect. Also if one's brother's honor is being attacked— like when he is being backbitten— then he should be defended. When a Muslim defends his brother in this way, there will also be a great reward for him in the end. Notice the following beautiful hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) who said,

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[1] Recorded by al-Tabaraani. According to al-Albaani, it is *hasan.* See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jami*, vol. 2, p. 1042.

مَا مِنِ امْرِئٍ يَخْذُلُ امْرَأً مُسْلِمًا فِي مَوْضِعٍ تُنْتَهَكُ فِيهِ حُرْمَتُهُ وَيُنْتَقَصُ فِيهِ مِنْ عِرْضِهِ إِلاَّ خَذَلَهُ اللَّهُ فِي مَوْطِنٍ يُحِبُّ فِيهِ نُصْرَتَهُ وَمَا مِنِ امْرِئٍ يَنْصُرُ مُسْلِمًا فِي مَوْضِعٍ يُنْتَقَصُ فِيهِ مِنْ عِرْضِهِ وَيُنْتَهَكُ فِيهِ مِنْ حُرْمَتِهِ إِلاَّ نَصَرَهُ اللَّهُ فِي مَوْطِنٍ يُحِبُّ نُصْرَتَهُ

"No man forsakes a Muslim when his rights are being violated or his honor is being belittled except that Allah will forsake him at a place in which he would love to have His help. And no man helps a Muslim at a time when his honor is being belittled or his rights are violated except that Allah will help him at a place in which he loves to have His help."[1]

In another very important hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

مَنْ ذَبَّ عَنْ لَحْمِ أَخِيهِ فِي الْغَيبَةِ كَانَ حَقًّا عَلَى اللَّهِ أَنْ يُعْتِقَهُ مِنَ النَّارِ

"Whoever defends the flesh of his brother in his absence has a right upon Allah to rescue him from the Fire."[2]

"He does not lie to him."

In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) refers to lying in his discussion of brotherly relations between Muslims. When a person lies to someone else, he is betraying that other person's trust in him. When a brother listens to his brother, he expects that his brother is telling him the truth. He would not expect that his own brother is going to intentionally tell him something that he knows is not true.

Lying can also lead to animosity and hatred. In general, most people do not like to be lied to. Indeed, it is narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not like this characteristic in a person. Furthermore, when someone is lied to and he believes the lie, he acts on the basis of that belief. When he acts on the basis of a lie, the results can be disastrous. For example, he might end up accusing someone of something he is innocent of because of a lie that has come to him. Hence, there is no question that lying can break down the unity and togetherness of society.

A Second Interpretation

Actually, this phrase of the Prophet (peace be upon him) could be understood in one of two ways. In most of the commentaries, the above approach was taken. However, the meaning could also be, “He does not belie him.”[1] In other words, when one brother speaks to the other brother, due to their brotherhood, the other one believes in him, does not doubt him and does not belie what he has said. This is also part of brotherhood in that there is trust between the brothers. A brother approaches his brother with a clean heart and he has no reason to feel that his brother is going to lie to him or mislead him.

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[1] Recorded by Abu Dawood and Ahmad. According to al-Albaani, it is *hasan*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 2, pp. 992-993.

[2] Recorded by Ahmad and al-Tabaraani. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 2, pp. 1071-1072.

“And he does not show contempt for him.”

Pride and arrogance, like envy, is one of the first sins ever committed. Satan was both arrogant and envious with respect to Adam. As stated before, he thought that he was better than Adam. Because of his feeling concerning his own self, he refused to obey a command from Allah. From this fact, one can recognize what a dangerous and threatening disease arrogance or pride is. Even a very small amount of it in one’s heart can lead him to the Hell-fire. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated,

لا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ مَنْ كَانَ فِي قَلْبِهِ مِثْقَالُ ذَرَّةٍ مِنْ كِبْرٍ قَالَ رَجُلٌ إِنَّ الرَّجُلَ يُحِبُّ أَنْ
يَكُونَ ثَوْبُهُ حَسَنًا وَنَعْلُهُ حَسَنَةً قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ جَمِيلٌ يُحِبُّ الْجَمَالَ الْكِبْرُ بَطَرُ الْحَقِّ
وَغَمْطُ النَّاسِ

“One who has an atom’s weight of pride in his heart will not enter Paradise.” A man said, “But a man loves that his clothes are nice and his shoes are nice.” He [the Prophet (peace be upon him)] replied, “Verily, Allah is beautiful and He loves beauty. [Thus, that is not pride.] Pride is rejecting the truth and showing disdain for the people.” (Recorded by Muslim.)

In general, the arrogant or proud person thinks that he is better than others; that is why he looks down upon others or shows contempt for them. Obviously, this strikes at the heart of brotherhood. Brotherhood implies treating each other as equals and giving them their due rights; indeed, it even implies giving preference to one’s brother over one’s self. But if a person thinks that his brother Muslim is beneath him or not worthy of his respect and proper treatment, he will probably not treat him equally, give him his due rights or ever give preference to him. That is why, Allah knows best, the Prophet (peace be upon him) specifically mentioned this matter in this hadith related to brotherhood.

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[1] Cf., al-Sindi, *Sharh al-Arbaeen*, p. 107.

"Piety is here" — and he pointed to his chest three times.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) moved from the question of showing disdain and contempt for another Muslim to the characteristic that is most deserving of respect in the sight of Allah: piety. The most important issue is not what part of the world one is from, the color of one's skin or the amount of money in one's bank account. Indeed, the most important issue is not even the outward acts that a person performs— as outward acts are not always accompanied with what is required in the heart.

The most important issue is something that is in the heart; it is *taqwa* or piety. Allah says in the Quran,

يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَـٰكُم مِّن ذَكَرٍ وَأُنثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَـٰكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَآئِلَ
لِتَعَارَفُوٓا۟ ۚ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ أَتْقَىٰكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

"O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honorable of you in the sight of Allah is the one with the most *taqwa.* Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware" (*al-Hujuraat* 13).

However, *taqwa*, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) demonstrated in this hadith, is in the heart. It is not something that someone can wear on his chest. It is, in fact, known only to Allah. A person may look contemptible from a worldly point of view, but he may be very beloved to Allah due to his *taqwa.* Therefore, how can anyone look down upon anyone else when he has no way of knowing whether or not he is better than that other person? He has no way of knowing who is the better person in Allah's sight. All of the matters by which he might judge the matter are, in fact, irrelevant. The question is only that of *taqwa* which is in the heart and known only to Allah. On this point, Allah has said in the Quran,

يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ لَا يَسْخَرْ قَوْمٌ مِّن قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰٓ أَن يَكُونُوا۟ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ
وَلَا نِسَآءٌ مِّن نِّسَآءٍ عَسَىٰٓ أَن يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُنَّ

"O believers! Let not a group scoff at another group, it may be that the latter are better than the former. Nor let [some] women scoff at other women for it may be that the latter are better than the former" (*al-Hujuraat* 11).

The following hadith from *Sahih al-Bukhari* also demonstrates that it is not the outward appearance and worldly gains that are of extreme importance:

عَنْ سَهْلِ بْنِ سَعْدٍ السَّاعِدِيِّ أَنَّهُ قَالَ مَرَّ رَجُلٌ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
فَقَالَ لِرَجُلٍ عِنْدَهُ جَالِسٍ مَا رَأْيُكَ فِي هَذَا فَقَالَ رَجُلٌ مِنْ أَشْرَافِ النَّاسِ هَذَا وَاللَّهِ

حَرِيٌّ إِنْ خَطَبَ أَنْ يُنْكَحَ وَإِنْ شَفَعَ أَنْ يُشَفَّعَ قَالَ فَسَكَتَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عَلَيْهِ
وَسَلَّمَ ثُمَّ مَرَّ رَجُلٌ آخَرُ فَقَالَ لَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَا رَأْيُكَ فِي هَذَا فَقَالَ
يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ هَذَا رَجُلٌ مِنْ فُقَرَاءِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ هَذَا حَرِيٌّ إِنْ خَطَبَ أَنْ لا يُنْكَحَ وَإِنْ
شَفَعَ أَنْ لا يُشَفَّعَ وَإِنْ قَالَ أَنْ لا يُسْمَعَ لِقَوْلِهِ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
هَذَا خَيْرٌ مِنْ مِلْءِ الأَرْضِ مِثْلَ هَذَا

On the authority of Sahl ibn Saad al-Saidi who said: A man passed by the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and he [the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him)] asked someone sitting next to him, "What do you think of that man?" He said, "He is from the noblest class of people. By Allah, if he were to ask for a woman's hand in marriage, his proposal would be accepted. If he were to intercede on behalf of another, his intercession would be accepted." The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) kept quiet. Then another man passed by and the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) asked the same man, "What do you think of that man?" He replied, "That man is from the poor Muslims. If he were to ask for a woman's hand in marriage, it would not be accepted. If he were to intercede on behalf of someone, his intercession would not be accepted. And if he were to speak, no one would listen to his speech." The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) then said, "This [poor] man is better than an earth full of the other [type of man]." (Recorded by al-Bukhari.)

In another hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated,

أَلا أُخْبِرُكُمْ بِأَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ كُلُّ ضَعِيفٍ مُتَضَعِّفٍ لَوْ أَقْسَمَ عَلَى اللَّهِ لأَبَرَّهُ أَلا أُخْبِرُكُمْ بِأَهْلِ
النَّارِ كُلُّ عُتُلٍّ جَوَّاظٍ مُسْتَكْبِرٍ

"Shall I not inform you of the people of Paradise? [The people of Paradise are made up of] every poor humble person who, if he were to swear by Allah, Allah would fulfill his vow. Shall I not also inform you of the inhabitants of the Fire. [The inhabitants of the Fire] are every violent, cruel, arrogant person." (Recorded by al-Bukhari.)

Finally, in another very important hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لا يَنْظُرُ إِلَى أَجْسَادِكُمْ وَلا إِلَى صُوَرِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ يَنْظُرُ إِلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ وَأَشَارَ
بِأَصَابِعِهِ إِلَى صَدْرِهِ

"Verily, Allah does not look at your bodies or your shapes. But He looks at your hearts." And then he pointed to his chest. (Recorded by Muslim.)

The true "values" and "worth" of the people will not be shown until the Day of Judgment. On that day, the worldly criteria of the people will be disregarded and the criterion will only be the true criterion of Allah. Allah says,

إِذَا وَقَعَتِ ٱلْوَاقِعَةُ ﴿١﴾ لَيْسَ لِوَقْعَتِهَا كَاذِبَةٌ ﴿٢﴾ خَافِضَةٌ رَّافِعَةٌ

"When the Event befalls— and there can be no denial of its befalling— bringing low [some] and exalting [others]" (*al-Waaqiah* 1-3). Those who were wrongfully haughty and arrogant will be brought down and cast into Hell. Those who were rightfully modest and humble will be raised to ranks in Paradise.

"It is enough of evil for a person to hold his brother Muslim in contempt."

Here the Prophet (peace be upon him) is emphasizing what he stated earlier. A Muslim should never show contempt or look down upon another Muslim. By both his emphasis and what he has explicitly stated in this phrase, the Prophet (peace be upon him) made it clear that belittling a Muslim or looking down upon him is a grave matter. If that were the only sin that a person committed, it would constitute a sufficient amount of evil. Allah created human beings as noble creatures. For Muslims, He gave the special and most significant blessing of faith. Therefore, no person has the right to be so arrogant as to look down upon a person whom Allah has so blessed. Indeed, Abu Bakr is reported to have said, "Do not belittle any Muslim for the most insignificant Muslim is great in the sight of Allah."[1]

According to ibn Daqeeq al-Eid, such contempt is manifested by the following types of actions: not greeting a Muslim upon seeing him, not responding to his greetings, thinking that he is not deserving of entering Paradise and so forth.[2]

In fact, al-Nawawi argues that no Muslim should ever belittle or look down upon anybody else. He should never think that he is better than anybody else. He should either think that others are better than him or he should not have any judgment on the matter. This is because he has no idea where his final resting place will be. When he sees a young Muslim, he should consider that younger Muslim better than himself because he has probably committed less sins. If he sees an older Muslim, he should consider that older Muslim better than himself because he has been in Islam longer. Even if he sees a non-

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[1] Quoted in Ahmad Fareed, *Min Akhlaaq al-Salaf* (Alexandria: Daar al-Aqeedah li-l-Turaath, 1991), p. 28.

[2] Ibn Daqeeq al-Eid, *Sharh*, p. 93. Ibn Daqeeq al-Eid makes an exception for showing disdain to the ignorant or clear evildoers. Allah knows best.

Muslim, he should realize that the non-Muslim may not go to Hell as Allah may guide him later.[1] Indeed, the non-Muslim could become a pious Muslim while the Muslim could stray from the straight path. If that is the case, who is left for him to look down upon and hold in contempt?

"All of a Muslim is inviolable to another Muslim: his blood, his wealth and his honor."

This is one of the most important messages of Islam with respect to Muslim society. For this reason, the Prophet (peace be upon him) took the most opportune moments to give the same teaching. According to ibn Rajab, he gave the same instruction in speeches given during the Farewell Pilgrimage on the Day of Sacrifice, the Day of Arafah and the second day of the days of Sacrifice.[2]

The wording was sometimes slightly different but the message was the same. For example, note the following hadith:

عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيِ اللَّهم عَنْهمَا أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ خَطَبَ النَّاسَ يَوْمَ
النَّحْرِ فَقَالَ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَيُّ يَوْمٍ هَذَا قَالُوا يَوْمٌ حَرَامٌ قَال فَأَيُّ بَلَدٍ هَذَا قَالُوا بَلَدٌ حَرَامٌ
قَالَ فَأَيُّ شَهْرٍ هَذَا قَالُوا شَهْرٌ حَرَامٌ قَال فَإِنَّ دِمَاءَكُمْ وَأَمْوَالَكُمْ وَأَعْرَاضَكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ
حَرَامٌ كَحُرْمَةِ يَوْمِكُمْ هَذَا فِي بَلَدِكُمْ هَذَا فِي شَهْرِكُمْ هَذَا فَأَعَادَهَا مِرَارًا ثُمَّ رَفَعَ رَأْسَهُ
فَقَالَ اللَّهُمَّ هَلْ بَلَّغْتُ اللَّهُمَّ هَلْ بَلَّغْتُ

On the authority of ibn Abbaas: The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) delivered a speech to the people on the Day of Sacrifice. He said, "O people, what day is this?" They answered, "The sacred (inviolable) day." Then he said, "What land is this?" They answered, "The sacred land." Then he said "What month is this?" They said, "The sacred month." He said, "Verily, your blood, wealth and honor are inviolable for you as the sacredness of this day of yours in this land of yours in this month of yours." He repeated it a number of times and then he raised his head and said, "O Allah, have I conveyed the message? O Allah, have I conveyed the message?" (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

Many authentic narrations of the above hadith also have at the end, "The one who is present should convey it to those who are absent." Indeed, these are words that every Muslim should know, understand and apply in his life. If these words of the Prophet (peace be upon him) were adhered to properly, societal problems would be kept to a minimum. Muslims would live secure and protected lives. They would not have to worry a great deal about their wealth being stolen, about their lives being put at risk or even their honor not being respected. The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentioned life, wealth and honor because, if these are secure and well, everything else should be secure and well.[1]

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[1] Al-Nawawi, *Sharh Matn al-Arbaeen*, p. 132.
[2] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 279.

This is another clear message, as are so many hadith in this collection by al-Nawawi, that a Muslim must do his best never to harm his brother Muslim with respect to his blood, wealth or honor. Furthermore, he should not do anything to make his brother upset or to hurt his feelings. He should only do toward his brother what he would love for his brother to do toward himself.

Indeed, before any Muslim performs any deed— after considering whether it is permissible in the *shareeah*— he should stop and ask himself, "If I perform this deed, is it going to make any of my Muslim brothers or sisters unhappy or upset? Is it going to harm or bother them in anyway?" Before, for example, a Muslim parks his car outside the mosque and blocks off others' cars, such that they will be troubled while leaving, he should ask himself these questions. Before, for example, a Muslim leaves his shoes at the front of the mosque, such that others will have to step over them and be bothered by them, instead of putting them in their designated shelves, he should ask himself these questions. Before, for example, a Muslim neighbor and parent allows his children to make noise all night long or run wild in the neighborhood, he should ask himself these questions. Before, for example, a Muslim parent demonstrates to his child that it is all right for him to make noise in the mosque and bother those people who are trying to pray, he should ask himself these questions.

A Muslim cannot just concern himself with his own happiness and ease. Instead, he must also think about others and consider what affect his deeds have on others.

If these matters were taken seriously and these noble teachings truly adhered to, then one would find the Muslim community as it is supposed to be. It will be as the Prophet (peace be upon him) described it in the following hadith:

تَرَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي تَرَاحُمِهِمْ وَتَوَادِّهِمْ وَتَعَاطُفِهِمْ كَمَثَلِ الْجَسَدِ إِذَا اشْتَكَى عُضْوًا
تَدَاعَى لَهُ سَائِرُ جَسَدِهِ بِالسَّهَرِ وَالْحُمَّى

"You will find the believers, with respect to their mutual mercy, love and compassion for one another, like one body: if one portion of the body is ailing, the rest of the body suffers from sleeplessness and fever." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.) The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) also said,

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[1] Cf., al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 254.

إِنَّ الْمُؤْمِنَ لِلْمُؤْمِنِ كَالْبُنْيَانِ يَشُدُّ بَعْضُهُ بَعْضًا

"A believer with respect to another believer is like a building: one part strengthens the other." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

Blood

Except in cases permitted by law[1], a Muslim must avoid the shedding of any other Muslim's blood. Indeed, he must do his best never to physically injure any other Muslim.

As this hadith states, one should neither harm his "blood" or his honor. The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said in another hadith,

سِبَابُ الْمُسْلِمِ فُسُوقٌ وَقِتَالُهُ كُفْرٌ

"Abusing a Muslim is disobedience [to Allah] and fighting him is [lesser] *kufr*." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

A hadith in *Sunan Abu Dawood* states,

لا يَزَالُ الْمُؤْمِنُ مُعْنِقًا صَالِحًا مَا لَمْ يُصِبْ دَمًا حَرَامًا فَإِذَا أَصَابَ دَمًا حَرَامًا بَلَّحَ

"A believer will continue to move along quickly [toward Paradise] and in a good state as long as he does not spill forbidden blood. If he spills forbidden blood, he becomes slow and heavy-footed."[2] This hadith was explained by Hasan who said,

> Intentional homicide of a believer is a grave sin. So long as a man does not kill a believer, he proceeds quickly in doing good works and remains free from the burden of a grave sin. But if he kills a believer unjustly, he is loaded with a heavy burden of a major sin. He is deprived of Allah's help to do good works and reaches near destruction in the Hereafter.[3]

A believer is very dear to Allah. A Muslim, therefore, should love every other believer. It is inconceivable that he would want to injure or kill a creature who believes in Allah and is worshipping Him. This is something very much hated by Allah. In fact, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

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[1] These permissible cases are discussed in the commentary to Hadith Number 14.

[2] Recorded by Abu Dawood. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 1272.

[3] Ahmad Hasan, *Sunan*, vol. 3, p. 1187.

لَزَوَالُ الدُّنْيَا أَهْوَنُ عَلَى اللَّهِ مِنْ قَتْلِ رَجُلٍ مُسْلِمٍ

“The perishing of this world is lighter in Allah’s sight than the killing of a Muslim man.”[1]

The following hadith also shows how displeasing the act of killing a believer is to Allah:

مَنْ قَتَلَ مُؤْمِنًا فَاعْتَبَطَ بِقَتْلِهِ لَمْ يَقْبَلِ اللَّهُ مِنْهُ صَرْفًا وَلَا عَدْلًا

“For whoever kills a believer and he is doing wrong in killing him, Allah will neither accept obligatory deeds or voluntary deeds from him.”[2]

Indeed, simply the intention or attempt to kill another Muslim will land a person in the Hell-fire. In an authentic hadith, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

إِذَا الْتَقَى الْمُسْلِمَانِ بِسَيْفَيْهِمَا فَالْقَاتِلُ وَالْمَقْتُولُ فِي النَّارِ فَقُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ هَذَا
الْقَاتِلُ فَمَا بَالُ الْمَقْتُولِ قَالَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ حَرِيصًا عَلَى قَتْلِ صَاحِبِهِ

“If two Muslims face each other with their swords, the killer and the killed are in the Fire.” I [the Companion Abu Bakra said], “This is the case for the killer, but why the killed?” He said, “Because he was eager to kill his companion.” (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

Allah states the penalty for intentionally killing another believer:

وَمَن يَقْتُلْ مُؤْمِنًا مُّتَعَمِّدًا فَجَزَآؤُهُۥ جَهَنَّمُ خَٰلِدًا فِيهَا وَغَضِبَ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
وَلَعَنَهُۥ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُۥ عَذَابًا عَظِيمًا

“Whoever kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is Hell to abide therein; and the wrath and the curse of Allah are upon him; and a great punishment is prepared for him” (*al-Nisaa* 93).

Another very strong statement from the Prophet (peace be upon him) is the following,

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[1] Recorded by al-Nasaai. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 804.

[2] The above translation is one interpretation of the meaning of the hadith. Another interpretation is that Allah will not accept a person’s repentance or ransom. (See Hasan, *Sunan*, vol. 2, p. 1187.) The hadith itself was recorded by Abu Dawood. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 1101. Another narration of the hadith states, “and he is pleased with killing him,” instead of“he is doing wrong in killing him”.

كُلُّ ذَنْبٍ عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَغْفِرَهُ إِلاَّ الرَّجُلُ يَقْتُلُ الْمُؤْمِنَ مُتَعَمِّدًا أَوِ الرَّجُلُ يَمُوتُ كَافِرًا

"It can be expected that Allah may forgive every sin except [for the sin of] a man who intentionally kills a believer or a man who dies as a disbeliever."[1] Although this hadith has been interpreted in many ways, the best interpretation seems to be that of al-Sindi. He wrote that its meaning is that it could be expected that any sin may be forgiven by Allah without first punishing its doer in the Hell-fire. However, that is not true for the sin of intentionally killing a believer. This sin will not be excused by Allah until after the person spends some time in the Hell-fire.[2] Allah knows best.

There is also another hadith with a similar implication. It states,

أَبى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَجْعَلَ لِقَاتِلِ الْمُؤْمِنِ تَوْبَةً

"Allah refuses to make for the killer of a believer any form of repentance."[3] The meaning of this hadith, and Allah knows best, could be that there is no act of repentance that can completely make up for one Muslim killing another believer.

Yet another moving hadith related to this topic is the following,

أَنَّ ابْنَ عَبَّاسٍ سُئِلَ عَمَّنْ قَتَلَ مُؤْمِنًا مُتَعَمِّدًا ثُمَّ تَابَ وَآمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا ثُمَّ اهْتَدَى
فَقَالَ ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ وَأَنَّى لَهُ التَّوْبَةُ سَمِعْتُ نَبِيَّكُمْ صلى الله عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ يَجِيءُ الْمَقْتُولُ
مُتَعَلِّقًا بِالْقَاتِلِ تَشْخَبُ أَوْدَاجُهُ دَمًا فَيَقُولُ أَيْ رَبِّ سَلْ هَذَا فِيمَ قَتَلَنِي ثُمَّ قَالَ وَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ
أَنْزَلَهَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ مَا نَسَخَهَا

Ibn Abbas was asked about a person who murdered a believer and then repented and believed and did good deeds and was then guided. Ibn Abbas said, "What repentance is there for him? I heard your Prophet (peace be upon him) say, 'The killed person will come hanging on to the killer with his veins flowing with blood. He will be saying, "Lord, ask this person why he killed me."'" Then he [ibn Abbas] said, "By Allah, Allah revealed that [that is, *al-Nisaa* 93] and He did not abrogate it."[4]

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[1] Recorded by Ahmad, al-Nasaai and Abu Dawood. Al-Albaani accepts it as *hasan*. See al-Albaani, *Silsilat al-Ahadeeth al-Saheeha*, vol. 2, p. 25.

[2] Al-Sindi, *Haashiyah*, vol. 7, p. 81.

[3] According to al-Albaani, this hadith was recorded by Muhammad ibn Hamzah in his *Hadeeth*, al-Waahidi in *al-Waseet* and al-Dhiyaa in *al-Mukhtaar*. Al-Albaani concludes that its chain is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Silsilat al-Ahadeeth al-Saheeha*, vol. 2, pp. 309-310.

[4] Recorded by al-Nasaai. Al-Tirmidhi has something very similar. Al-Albaani has declared hadith with similar wording to it *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 1333. This hadith

Everyone who is involved in the killing of a believer is deserving of the punishment of the Hell-fire. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

لَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ السَّمَاءِ وَأَهْلَ الأَرْضِ اشْتَرَكُوا فِي دَمِ مُؤْمِنٍ لَأَكَبَّهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي النَّارِ

"If the inhabitants of the heaven and the inhabitants of the earth jointly participated in the blood of a believer, Allah would certainly throw them all into the Fire."[1]

The texts of the Quran and sunnah are clear: No Muslim should ever even consider wrongfully taking the life of any other believer in this world.[2]

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may shed light on the previously mentioned point that there is no repentance for the murderer of a believer. If a person wrongs another, part of his repentance is to get the other person's forgiveness. If the other person is dead, he cannot ask him for forgiveness. On the Day of Judgment also, the murdered person will come hanging on to the murderer, as mentioned in this hadith. However, and Allah knows best, a person's sincere repentance from murder may reduce a person's punishment in the Hell-fire.

[1] Recorded by al-Tirmidhi. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, vol. 2, p. 57. There is a difference of opinion concerning the repentance of a murderer. The majority of the scholars say that there is a chance for complete repentance. They base their conclusion on general verses like the following: "Say: O My slaves who have transgressed against themselves, despair not of the mercy of Allah. Verily, Allah forgives all sins" (*al-Zumar* 53); "Verily, Allah does not forgive that one should ascribe partners to Him. But He forgives whatever is less than that for whomsoever He wills" (*al-Nisaa* 48). Furthermore, there is a hadith recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim which states that a man killed one hundred people and Allah still accepted his repentance. They also use the following hadith recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim: "Allah laughs at two men, one who killed the other and they both enter Paradise. One fought the other for the sake of Allah and was killed [by the other]. Allah repented toward the other and he embraced Islam and became a martyr." (However, this hadith is irrelevant because the embracing of Islam wipes away all previous deeds, including associating partners with Allah. One cannot argue based on that hadith that if a Muslim murders another Muslim that he can repent.) Another group of scholars, including Abu Hanifah and al-Shafi'ee, say that the murderer is under the decision of Allah. He may forgive him or punish him, with or without repentance. A third group of scholars say that there is no repentance for the murderer. This is ibn Abbas' view. It has also been narrated from Abdullah ibn Umar, Abu Huraira and other early scholars. There is also one narration from Imam Ahmad to this effect. The evidence for this view are the verse, hadith and narrations stated above in the text. Based on another narration, some argue that ibn Abbaas made his statement with respect to someone who was intending to commit murder. Hence, ibn Abbaas told him that there is no repentance for the murderer in the hopes that it would sway him from committing murder. Although it is difficult to accept that interpretation (unless the narration can be shown to be authentic), the hadith of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) seem to be clear on this point. All of the arguments of those who say that there is repentance are general arguments. They cannot overrule the specific arguments found in the hadith mentioned in the text above, all of which have been graded acceptable by al-Albaani. The strongest conclusion in this author's opinion, and Allah knows best, is that when a murderer repents, that repentance will be of some benefit to him. However, that repentance is not enough to completely wipe away the heinous sin that he has committed. Therefore, he will still have to face some punishment in the Hereafter for his sin. [For some of the above information and for arguments by one who concludes that there is a complete repentance for the murderer, see Haamid al-Muslih, *Al-Maasi wa Athaaruhu ala al-Fard wa al-Mujtama* (Jeddah: Maktabah al-Dhiyaa, 1992), pp. 337-342.]

[2] In this century alone, many Muslims have fought with and killed other Muslims. Many times this is done in the name of some nationality, country or man-made ideology, and not for the sake

Wealth

The blood of each Muslim is inviolable and so is his wealth— in a manner similar to that of his blood. Hence, no Muslim should harm another Muslim's lawful wealth in any way. Indeed, as is clear in the teachings of this hadith, he should never willingly try to damage his brother's economic well-being or prosperity. This strikes at the core of brotherhood and leads to hatred and animosity among Muslims.

A Muslim should show respect for his brother's property in a manner similar to how he shows respect for his brother's life. He should try to not harm his brother's property in any fashion. If he harms his brother's property, he should try to replace it or compensate his brother for any damage that he has caused. For example, if a Muslim borrows something from his brother, he should take good care of that item. He should be careful not to damage it in any way and if he does, he should compensate the owner— unless the owner, as a brotherly gesture, overlooks the damage caused and forgives the person.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) has said,

لا يَحِلُّ مَالُ امْرِئٍ مُسْلِمٍ إِلا بِطِيبِ نَفْسِهِ

"The wealth of a Muslim person is not permissible except by the pleasure of his soul."[1] In other words, one cannot take or use any portion of another brother's wealth unless one is certain that he is pleased with that and does not disapprove of such an act.

Also, there should be absolutely no coercion in business dealings. A Muslim should feel free to take any permissible deal or to refuse any deal. Allah has said,

يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ لَا تَأْكُلُوٓا۟ أَمْوَٰلَكُم بَيْنَكُم بِٱلْبَـٰطِلِ إِلَّآ أَن
تَكُونَ تِجَـٰرَةً عَن تَرَاضٍ مِّنكُمْ

"O believers! Devour not your property among yourselves unjustly except it be a trade among you, by mutual consent" (*al-Nisaa* 29).

The importance that Islam places on preserving and protecting one's wealth can be seen in the punishment for theft. The thief, if certain conditions

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of Allah. Only Allah knows what will be the plight of all those Muslims who did such acts. Sometimes Muslims kill other Muslims thinking that they are doing so legitimately and for the sake of Allah. However, it seems that there is sometimes a rush to judgment on this matter and people decide on the flimsiest evidence to kill other Muslims. One thing seems to be certain: If there is any doubt about the legitimacy of killing another Muslim, then the Muslim should absolutely avoid the killing in such a case.

[1] Recorded by al-Daraqutni and al-Baihaqi. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Irwa*, vol. 5, p. 279.

are met, is to have his hand cut off. This is a harsh punishment— however, it is based on wisdom and the importance of safeguarding people's wealth.

Unfortunately, one must once again comment on the reality of this teaching vis-a-vis the practice of the Muslims of today. Is there real honesty among Muslims when it comes to business practices? Do they respect each others' property and make sure not to harm it in anyway? If these aspects are not being upheld among Muslims, is it not understandable that the feeling of brotherhood is not to be found among the Muslims of today as it was found among those Muslims who implemented these teachings?

Honor

Again, a person's honor is to be respected like his life and his wealth are to be respected. This means that one must be extremely careful about what one says about another Muslim. A Muslim's honor should never be attacked without due cause in the *shareeah.* A Muslim's name should never be dragged through the mud simply out of spite and a desire to see one's brother hurt. Such actions are grave matters indeed and, once again, strike at the very core of the brotherhood that Islam seeks to create among its adherents.

The importance of respecting another's honor can be seen by many of the rules and regulations of Islam. Take, for example, the punishment for defamation and slander. Allah says in the Quran,

وَٱلَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ ٱلْمُحْصَنَـٰتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَأْتُوا۟ بِأَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَآءَ فَٱجْلِدُوهُمْ ثَمَـٰنِينَ
جَلْدَةً وَلَا تَقْبَلُوا۟ لَهُمْ شَهَـٰدَةً أَبَدًا ۚ وَأُو۟لَـٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْفَـٰسِقُونَ

"And those who accuse chaste women, and produce not four witnesses, flog them with eighty stripes, and reject their testimony forever. They indeed are the evildoers" (*al-Noor* 4).

Backbiting— speaking truthfully behind one's brother's back in ways that are displeasing to him— is another means by which a person violates his brother's honor. Allah has described this terrible deed in a heart-moving fashion,

وَلَا يَغْتَب بَّعْضُكُم بَعْضًا ۚ أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا
فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ ۚ وَٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ

"Do not backbite one another. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would hate it [so do not backbite]. And fear Allah. Verily, Allah is the One who forgives and accepts repentance, Most Merciful" (*al-Hujuraat* 12).

Indeed, one could also consider the punishment for adultery and fornication as being part of Islam's preservation of honor. This is because adultery, in particular, brings great shame to the other spouse as well as the families involved. This may be, Allah knows best, one of the reasons why the punishment is so great in the case of adultery.

One should preserve one's tongue and actions from ever doing anything to wrong a Muslim's honor or reputation. Unfortunately, it may be much "easier" to fail in this aspect in comparison to respecting his life and wealth. Nonetheless, a Muslim must realize that his brother's honor is inviolable. Like his life and his wealth, he must take extra caution not to do anything to hurt his brother's honor.

Other Points Related to This Hadith

- Al-Qaasimi and Abdul Maalik al-Qaasim state that it is permissible to wish that another person loses a bounty if that other person is using that bounty for evil or malicious purposes. In this case, one is not disliking that the other person received a bounty but one is simply disliking the way the bounty is being used. Hence, there is nothing wrong with disliking what the disbelievers and evildoers possess when they use those bounties in the wrong way.[1]
- In reality, those who should be the least envious among themselves are the workers for the sake of Islam— but, unfortunately, many times they are the most envious and spiteful. They should be the least envious because, they claim, they are all working for the same purpose: the pleasure of Allah and the support of His religion in this world. Allah has enough pleasure and bounty for all of them. If they are all working for the same purpose, it is like, to use a modern-day metaphor, they are all on the same team. They should each want the team to win and not worry so much about individual statistics. The better the team does, the happier everyone should be. Therefore, if the plight of Muslims and Islam is improved anywhere, all Muslim workers should be happy about that whether or not it was they themselves or their organization or group that brought about that good result. However, such only occurs when they clean their hearts of any other intentions and work not for their own group or party but solely for the sake of Allah. Then, whatever pleases Allah, they are happy with, even if it came at the hands of some other Muslim workers. And whatever displeases Allah, they are unhappy with, even if it came at the hands of their own group or party.
- One of the ways by which hatred toward another brother may be removed from one's heart is by concentrating on the good deeds and kind acts that the brother has performed. When one thinks about those things, the minor

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[1] Al-Qaasimi, *Mauidhat*, p. 322; A. al-Qaasim, p. 6.

agitating acts that he did will soon be forgotten. The feelings of rancor and animosity in the heart will soon be replaced, Allah willing, by feelings of friendship and brotherhood.

- If a scholar is qualified to make *ijtihaad* and, in doing so, comes to a conclusion which is different from another scholar's, then, as long as his conclusion has some basis and is not obviously against the Quran and sunnah, he should not be hated due to his honest conclusion. If he is hated due to his conclusion, then that hatred cannot be considered hatred for the sake of Allah. The scholar has the right to make his own *ijtihaad*. One cannot force his *ijtihaad* upon others. He cannot be hated because he has not committed any sin. Allah willing, he will be rewarded for his efforts even if he were wrong. However, his opinion may be opposed in a polite and respectful manner.
- Sometimes one brother is asked about another brother, for the purpose of marriage, business or for some other aspect. The brother who is being questioned knows that the prospective brother is not qualified or is not a good candidate. However, he feels that if he says anything bad about the brother, he will be backbiting and doing something against the brotherhood of Islam. He fails to realize that by not stating the truth about the brother, someone is bound to get hurt. Hence, he must state the truth if he feels that the brother is not qualified. The Prophet (peace be upon him) set an example in this matter. Fatimah bint Qais was proposed to by Abu Jahm and Muawiya. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told her about one that he beat women and about the other that he is poor and has no wealth. Hence, the Prophet (peace be upon him) even suggested a third person for her to marry. This is part of the sincere advice toward one another and it does not violate the principles of brotherhood in Islam.[1]
- Auctions are allowed in Islam and do not violate the principles mentioned in this hadith. This hadith is specifically referring to cases where there is an agreement between the buyer and the seller, and then a third party interferes with that agreement. However, in the case of auctions, there is no agreement and the seller has not accepted anyone's offer. Al-Bukhari has a chapter in his *Sahih* demonstrating that auction-type sales are permissible in Islam.[2]
- Throughout the Muslim world today, one might find the beautiful principles taught in this hadith violated virtually on a daily basis. There may be some Muslims who cheat each other in business. Some Muslims even lie to each other. Other Muslims might even be prejudice against each other and look down upon one another. Sometimes Muslims do not show any respect to each other; indeed, it is as if some of them sometimes do not have any self-respect. Perhaps, Allah knows best, this hadith points to two

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[1] Cf., ibn Taimiya, *al-Hajr*, p. 29.

[2] Cf., Khan, trans., *Sahih al-Bukhari*, vol. 3, p. 198.

very important aspects that may remove this phenomenon. The first aspect is that every Muslim must realize that he is a slave and servant of Allah. This is the most honorable position a human can achieve. Indeed, this is the very purpose for which he was created. As Allah has said,

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ ٱلْجِنَّ وَٱلْإِنسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

"I have created not jinn and mankind except for them to worship and serve Me" (*al-Dhaariyaat* 56). When a person realizes this fact, this should give him "self-respect for the sake of Allah". A person with such self-respect would find many deeds to be beneath him and unbecoming of his status as a servant of Allah. He would not be willing to lie or cheat. He could not look down upon others or violate their rights as all of those deeds are not worthy of a person who is a true servant of Allah. The second aspect, then, is to realize that all the Muslims around him are also servants of Allah and his brothers for the sake of Allah. If they are his brothers for the sake of Allah, how could he then cheat them, lie to them, be prejudiced against them and so forth. This one phrase in the middle of this hadith, "And be, [O] servants of Allah, brethren" could have far-reaching implications—indeed, it could change the entire nature of the Muslim societies of today—if it were simply understood properly and applied properly. And Allah knows best.

- Brotherhood is not simply a matter of putting twenty dollars in a box for some Muslims in a far away place. Brotherhood has much more to do with the day to day activities between individual Muslims. To be a true brother to someone one sees everyday may be a much more difficult task than simply helping far away Muslims with a once-in-a-while financial contribution. How one deals with his brothers who are close to him may be the true test of brotherhood.
- A Muslim should never want to take advantage of his brother. He should not intentionally do wrong to his brother and then say, "He is my brother, he won't mind." He should not do this because this is not a brotherly way to act. A brother does not take advantage of his brother's kindness. Instead, he will do his best never to put his brother in a position where the latter will have to overlook or forgive his actions.
- A Muslim should not lie in general but especially not to his Muslim brother. In modern times, many of the Muslims who are active in the area of *dawah* and Islamic work have become very lax on this point. They are very quick to lie on behalf of their Islamic organization or movement. They justify their actions by claiming that this is best for the "bigger picture" of Islam. Unfortunately, though, when a person gets into a lying mode, it becomes easy for him to lie on a regular basis and in cases where there was no need to lie. Furthermore, lies have a tendency to get bigger and bigger, as a person has to cover up his earlier smaller lies with bigger lies. The end

result is usually disastrous. After some time, the lies begin to be exposed and become clear to everyone. When the people see that these lies were all perpetrated in the name of the "bigger picture" of Islam, it is the Islamic movement itself that is sometimes hurt the worst. Hence, in the long-run, it is very damaging for Islam as a whole. Instead of resorting to such practices and allowing them to get out of hand, the Muslims should remember these words of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in this hadith: a Muslim does not lie to his brother. A Muslim may deceive the enemy in a battlefield. But his brother Muslim who is not part of his organization or movement, for example, is not the same as his enemy in the battlefield. In general, there is no Islamic justification for lying to such a Muslim and, in the long run, those lies usually end up having disastrous results when they are finally exposed.

- A man said to Umar ibn Abdul Aziz, "Consider the elderly Muslims like a father, their young like [your] children and those in the middle like [your] brethren. Which of those would you like to harm?"[1]
- Yahya ibn Muaadh al-Raazi once said, "Let the believer get one of three things from you: If you do not benefit him, at least do not harm him; if you do not make him joyful, at least do not make him grieve; and if you do not praise him, at least do not criticize him."[2]
- This hadith discusses many of the diseases of the heart. These diseases can be very damaging. Indeed, they can lead a person to leaving the fold of Islam. Abdul Maalik al-Qaasim points out that the "pillars" or roots of *kufr* (disbelief) are four: *kibr* (pride and arrogance), *hasad* (envy), *baghdhaa* (hatred) and *shahwah* (desires, passions). The Prophet (peace be upon him), directly or indirectly, touched upon three of these in this hadith. *Kibr* keeps one from submitting to the truth, even if the person recognizes it as true. *Hasad* keeps one from accepting advice and guidance from others because the person does not want to accept the fact that others might have something that he does not. Hatred keeps one being just and following the truth wherever it may be.[3]

Summary of the Hadith

- Muslims are all servants of Allah and they must look at each other and actually treat each other like brothers.[4] This brotherhood is not something that merely exists on the lips but it must actually be put into practice in

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[1] Quoted in ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 283.
[2] Quoted in ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 283.
[3] A. al-Qaasim, p. 8.
[4] The word "brother" has been used throughout this commentary. That was just to keep it closer to the actual word that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used and for the sake of flow. Obviously, though, the exact same rulings and principles apply to the relationship between brothers only, brothers and sisters and sisters only.

everyday living. This is partially accomplished by adhering to the following teachings that have come from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) in this hadith:
(1) The Muslim brothers should not be envious of one another.
(2) They should not hurt each other financially by artificially raising prices against each other or undercutting sales that have already been concluded.
(3) They should not hate each other and, consequently, they should avoid all of those acts that could gender hatred among brothers.
(4) They should not turn away from each other and avoid one another. Instead, when they see each other they should greet each other with the greetings of peace and with a smiling face.
(5) A brother should not commit any type of *dhulm* with respect to his brother.
(6) A true brother is the one who comes to his brother's assistance and does not abandon him in his hour of need.
(7) True brothers do not lie to each other. Instead, they are honest and straightforward with one another.
(8) A true brother sees his brother as his equal— or he sees his brother as being superior to himself. He would never be so arrogant as to look down on his brother or despise his brother.

- The true estimate of a person's worth is his *taqwa*. It is not the outer manifestations of this world, such as wealth, position, lineage and so forth. But *taqwa* is in the heart and no one except Allah knows the level of a person's *taqwa*. No Muslim can know for certain that he has more *taqwa* than another Muslim. Therefore, no Muslim could ever know for certain that he is better than another Muslim. Since that is the case, there is no call for a Muslim ever to look down upon or show contempt for his brother Muslim. Indeed, this is a great evil. In fact, that by itself is a sufficient amount of evil for any one to carry.
- All of a Muslim is inviolable to every other Muslim. In other words, every Muslim must treat every other Muslim with the proper amount of respect and good behavior.
- In particular, one must realize that a Muslim's blood is inviolable. One must avoid any illegal form of spilling of Muslim blood or physically injuring a Muslim.
- Similarly, a Muslim's wealth is also inviolable. One must respect the private property of his brother and should not use it unless it is known that his brother approves of that act.
- Finally, one must also show utmost respect for his brother's honor. He must be careful of his tongue and never wrongfully harm the honor of his brother.

Hadith #36
"Whoever Relieves a Believer..."

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ عَنْ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ مَنْ نَفَّسَ عَنْ مُؤْمِنٍ كُرْبَةً مِنْ كُرَبِ الدُّنْيَا نَفَّسَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ كُرْبَةً مِنْ كُرَبِ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَمَنْ يَسَّرَ عَلَى مُعْسِرٍ يَسَّرَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالآخِرَةِ وَمَنْ سَتَرَ مُسْلِمًا سَتَرَهُ اللَّهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالآخِرَةِ وَاللَّهُ فِي عَوْنِ الْعَبْدِ مَا كَانَ الْعَبْدُ فِي عَوْنِ أَخِيهِ وَمَنْ سَلَكَ طَرِيقًا يَلْتَمِسُ فِيهِ عِلْمًا سَهَّلَ اللَّهُ لَهُ بِهِ طَرِيقًا إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَمَا اجْتَمَعَ قَوْمٌ فِي بَيْتٍ مِنْ بُيُوتِ اللَّهِ يَتْلُونَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَيَتَدَارَسُونَهُ بَيْنَهُمْ إِلاَّ نَزَلَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّكِينَةُ وَغَشِيَتْهُمُ الرَّحْمَةُ وَحَفَّتْهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَذَكَرَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِيمَنْ عِنْدَهُ وَمَنْ بَطَّأَ بِهِ عَمَلُهُ لَمْ يُسْرِعْ بِهِ نَسَبُه

رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ بِهذا اللَّفْظِ

On the authority of Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him) from the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) who said, "Whoever relieves a believer's distress of the distressful aspects of this world, Allah will rescue him from a difficulty of the difficulties of the Hereafter. Whoever alleviates [the situation of] one in dire straits who cannot repay his debt, Allah will alleviate his lot in both this world and the Hereafter. Whoever conceals [the faults of] a Muslim, Allah will conceal [his faults] in this life and the Hereafter. Allah is helping the servant as long as the servant is helping his brother. Whoever follows a path in order to seek knowledge thereby, Allah will make easy for him, due to it, a path to Paradise. No people gather together in a house of the

houses of Allah, reciting the Book of Allah and studying it among themselves, except that tranquillity is descended upon them, mercy covers them, the angels surround them and Allah makes mention of them to those in His presence. Whoever is slowed by his deeds will not be hastened forward by his lineage.”
Recorded by Muslim with that wording.

Selected Vocabulary

نفّس	- “removes”
كربة	- a source of distress or grieving, something that preoccupies and bothers the mind
يسّر	- “he makes easy”
معسر	- the one in straitened circumstances; in particular, however, the one who is in debt and is not able to repay his debt
ستر	- “he concealed”
عون	- “assistance, helping”
سلك	- “traversed”
طريق	- “path”
يلتمس	- “he is seeking”
علم	- “knowledge”
سهّل	- “he makes simple”
اجتمع	- “gather together”
بيت	- “house”
بيوت	- “houses”
يتلون	- “reciting”
يتدارسونه	- “studying it with each other,” this word means to read something and to retain it, such that one does not forget it.[1]
بينهم	- “among them”
نزلت	- “descended”
السكينة	- “tranquillity, calmness”
غشيتهم	- “covers them”
الرحمة	- “the mercy”
حفتهم	- “surrounds them”
ذكرهم	- “mentioned them”
بطّأ	- “slowed”
يسرع	- “sped, hastened forward”
نسبه	- “his lineage”

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[1] Cf., al-Mubaarak ibn al-Atheer, *Al-Nihaayah fi Ghareeb al-Hadeeth wa al-Athaar* (Beirut: Daar Ihyaa al-Turaath al-Arabi, n.d.), vol. 2, p. 113.

Takhreej

This hadith was recorded, with various wordings, by Muslim, Abu Dawood, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nasaai in *al-Kubra*, ibn Maajah, Ahmad, ibn Abu Shaibah, al-Daarimi, al-Haakim, ibn Hibbaan and many others from the chain of Abu Saalih from Abu Huraira.

Muslim's narration of this wording is from al-Amash on the authority of Abu Saalih. As ibn Rajab points out, this narration has been criticized by some scholars as not becoming the criteria of *Sahih Muslim* since other narrations have al-Amash saying, "It has been narrated on the authority of Abu Saalih," implying that he was not the one who heard it directly from Abu Saalih. According to al-Tirmidhi, this broken chain from al-Amash is the correct narration from him.[1]

In any case, though, separate portions of the hadith have supporting evidence that are found in numerous works of hadith. For example, both al-Bukhari and Muslim record the following hadith on the authority of ibn Umar from the Prophet (peace be upon him),

الْمُسْلِمُ أَخُو الْمُسْلِمِ لا يَظْلِمُهُ وَلا يُسْلِمُهُ وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي حَاجَةِ أَخِيهِ كَانَ اللَّهُ فِي
حَاجَتِهِ وَمَنْ فَرَّجَ عَنْ مُسْلِمٍ كُرْبَةً فَرَّجَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ كُرْبَةً مِنْ كُرُبَاتِ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَمَنْ سَتَرَ
مُسْلِمًا سَتَرَهُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

"A Muslim is a brother to a Muslim. He does not wrong him. Nor does he forsake him when he is in need. Whoever is fulfilling the need of his brother, Allah is fulfilling his needs. Whoever relieves a Muslim from a distress, Allah removes from him a distress from the distressful aspect of the Day of Resurrection. And whoever conceals [the faults of] a Muslim, Allah will conceal [his faults] on the Day of Resurrection."

Muslim also records similar hadith on the authority of both Abu Huraira and Abu Saeed al-Khudri. Those hadith were also recorded by Ahmad, Abdul Razzaaq, al-Tirmidhi, ibn Maajah, ibn Abu Shaiba and others.

Similar hadith have also been recorded on the authority of the Companions Auf ibn Maalik al-Ashjai and ibn Abbaas.[2]

General Comments About the Hadith

This hadith is closely related to the previous hadith in that it states some of the most important acts that strengthen the Islamic brotherhood. In fact, this hadith is one of the most important encouraging Muslims to help one another in their worldly lives. They should help one another by removing hardships, being easy with each other in times of debt, concealing each others' faults and mistakes and generally assisting one another in what is good. When a Muslim does these kinds of acts, Allah will reward him in a similar fashion.

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[1] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 284.

[2] Cf., ibn Muhammad, pp. 203-205.

Furthermore, it encourages the Muslim to strive after knowledge as this striving is a way to finding the path to Paradise. Of course, the most important means of attaining knowledge is the study of the Quran. The study of the Quran is an act that is blessed by Allah.

Finally, if deeds like the above are not present and the person has not done what it takes to enter Paradise, his lineage, no matter how noble or wealthy, will be of no avail to him.

About the Narrator: Abu Huraira

Abu Huraira is discussed in the commentary to Hadith Number 9.

"Whoever relieves a believer's [1] distress of the distressful aspects of this world, Allah will rescue him from a difficulty of the difficulties of the Hereafter."

A *kurbah* (كربة) is that which distresses the soul and preoccupies the mind. In this world, many aspects can be described as *kurbah.* A person could face difficulties, problems and challenges almost every day in his life.

If a Muslim truly seeks to please Allah, his attitude toward his brother should not simply be a passive one. In other words, it should not be sufficient for him that he does not harm his brother in any way. Beyond that, he should actively seek to help his brother and remove from him any difficulties that he might be facing. If he does so, Allah will reward him in a similar fashion. This is, again, one of those many pieces of evidence that demonstrate that the reward for an action is of the same nature as the action itself. Hence, if someone removes a difficulty from someone else, his reward will be to have a difficulty removed from himself.

This hadith demonstrates the importance of fulfilling the needs of one's brother. This type of deed, with its great reward, is open to many Muslims. This is so because it can be accomplished by using one's knowledge, wealth or authority. It may be by simply advising him to what is best or guiding him to something good. It could also be by praying to Allah to help the other person and relieve his plight.[1]

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[1] Al-Haitami (*Fath*, p. 255) notes that *kurbah* (distress) is mentioned in relation to a believer (*mu'min*) while concealing a fault is stated in relation to a Muslim. According to him, there is some significance to this. A *kurbah* is related to internal emotions and feelings as is *imaan* or faith. Concealing a fault is related to an outward deed that was performed, as is being a Muslim or "doing the outward deeds of Islam." Allah knows best.

The word translated as "relieves" is actually *naffasa* (نفّس). This means to lighten or relieve the burden. It comes from the expression, تنفس الخناق (giving breath to one who is about to suffocate). It is as if one relaxes the suffocating person and opens a passage for him to breath so that he is able to take a breath.[2] Other similar authentic hadith use the word فرج (*faraja*). This is a much stronger term. This implies removing the distress and all of the psychological worries that go with it. The reward for relieving is also relieving a burden while the reward for removing will be the removal of a burden.[3]

The important aspect to note here is that Allah promises a relief of a burden that is of the Hereafter only for one who relieves his brother's distress and it does not mention a relief of burden in this world. But in the other cases mentioned in this hadith, Allah makes mention of rewards in both this life and the Hereafter. This aspect has been explained in a number of ways. One explanation is that a *kurbah* is a great hardship. Not everybody faces such a difficulty in this world, as opposed to the later mentioned cases of being in dire straits or needing one's faults concealed. No one escapes experiencing those aspects in this world at one time or another.

A second explanation is that the *kurbah* or hardships of this world are nothing in comparison to the hardships that one will face in the Hereafter. Therefore, Allah preserves the reward for such a deed for the Hereafter when the person will be greatly in need of such a favor from Allah. This is indeed a great reward from Allah for relieving a brother's burden in this life.

To understand the above statement, one can refer to many hadith describing the kinds of hardships that mankind will face on the Day of Judgment. For example, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

يَعْرَقُ النَّاسُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ حَتَّى يَذْهَبَ عَرَقُهُمْ فِي الأَرْضِ سَبْعِينَ ذِرَاعًا وَيُلْجِمُهُمْ حَتَّى يَبْلُغَ آذَانَهُمْ

"The people will sweat so profusely on the Day of Resurrection that their sweat will sink seventy units into the earth and it will rise up until it will reach the people's ears." (Recorded by al-Bukhari.) The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said,

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[1] Cf., al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 255.

[2] Cf., al-Teebi, vol. 2, p. 665.

[3] Cf., ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 286; Sultaan, p. 309.

تُدْنَى الشَّمْسُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مِنَ الْخلْقِ حَتَّى تَكُون مِنْهُمْ كَمِقْدَارِ مِيلٍ.. فَيَكُونُ النَّاسُ
عَلَى قَدْرِ أَعْمَالِهِمْ فِي الْعَرَق فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَكُونُ إِلَى كَعْبَيْهِ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَكُونُ إِلَى رُكْبَتَيْهِ
وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَكُونُ إِلَى حَقْوَيْهِ وَمِنْهُم مَنْ يُلْجِمُهُ الْعَرَقُ إِلْجَامًا قَالَ وَأَشَارَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ
صلى الله عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بِيَدِهِ إِلَى فِيهِ

"One the Day of Resurrection, the sun would draw so close to the people that there would be left only the distance of one mile... The people would be submerged in perspiration according to their deeds. Some will be up to their knees, some up to the waist and some would have the bridle of perspiration," and he pointed with his hand toward his mouth. (Recorded by Muslim.)

These hadith display the hardship and difficulties that people will be faced with on that great Day. Perhaps, Allah will save a Muslim from difficulty on that Day because that Muslim relieved a brother's distress in this world. Such is the great mercy of Allah and how great His rewards are in comparison to the deeds that are performed.

One of the greatest hardship or stresses that Muslims face nowadays is the onslaught of non-Islamic values and civilizations. Even in their own Muslim lands, Muslims are faced with hardships in applying Islam. In some areas, Muslims are put into prison, both men and women, simply for demonstrating some of the outward manifestations of their faith. This is truly a great *kurbah* and distress. If other Muslims come to their rescue and relieve them from such difficulties, Allah willing, as this hadith demonstrates, their reward will be great as Allah will relieve them from difficulties and hardships on the Day of Judgment.

One can only imagine what society would be like--- indeed, what the world would be like—- if every Muslim would take this approach to life. The Muslim would go out in search of those who are in need and troubled because he knows that by helping them, he is actually helping himself and, Allah willing, saving himself from great hardship in the Hereafter. This characteristic of actively seeking opportunities to help others should be found in everyone who considers himself a true believer and Muslim.

Incidentally, according to al-Haitami, the mentioning of relieving a believer's stressful situation was simply for the purpose of honoring believers and emphasizing the importance of their good treatment. Otherwise, he says, the reward stated in this hadith applies to relieving a distressful situation of any human. This is because, as was mentioned previously, there is a reward for assisting any living creature. He also points out that the level of reward, though, decreases as the honor of the person helped decreases. Hence, first come believers, then comes non-Muslim citizens of the Islamic state followed by a non-citizen of the Islamic state who is allowed to visit the state and then comes non-Muslim citizens of non-Islamic states.[1]

> “Whoever alleviates [the situation of] one in dire straits who cannot repay his debt, Allah will alleviate his lot in both this world and the Hereafter.”

The Day of Judgment can be a very difficult and compelling day. This is how Allah described it with respect to the disbelievers,

ٱلْمُلْكُ يَوْمَئِذٍ ٱلْحَقُّ لِلرَّحْمَٰنِ ۚ وَكَانَ يَوْمًا عَلَى ٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ عَسِيرًا

“The sovereignty that day with be the true sovereignty, belonging to the Most Gracious. And it will be a hard day on the disbelievers” (*al-Furqaan* 26). The only way to be rescued from such difficulties on that Day is by attaining the grace and mercy of the Master of that Day, Allah. In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has mentioned one of the ways by which one may attain that mercy from Allah.

Relieving one brother’s debt is an act that is beloved to Allah— and has obvious implications for the strength of the brotherhood. There are basically two ways by which one can relieve a person’s debt and gain the blessings mentioned in this hadith. First, the loaner can wait until the impoverished debtor has the means to repay the debt. In fact, this is an obligation commanded by Allah. It is not right for a Muslim to demand his money back from a brother who he knows sincerely cannot afford to pay him. Allah says,

وَإِن كَانَ ذُو عُسْرَةٍ فَنَظِرَةٌ إِلَىٰ مَيْسَرَةٍ ۚ

“And if the debtor is in straitened circumstances, then grant him time until it is easy for him to repay” (*al-Baqara* 280).

A second option is to reduce the debt or to forgive the debt completely. After the above statement, Allah says, with a reminder of one’s meeting with Allah in the Hereafter:

وَأَن تَصَدَّقُوا۟ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ ۖ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٨٠﴾ وَٱتَّقُوا۟ يَوْمًا تُرْجَعُونَ
فِيهِ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ ۖ ثُمَّ تُوَفَّىٰ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ

“But if you remit it [the debt] by way of charity, that is better for you if you did but know. And be afraid of the Day when you shall be brought back to Allah. Then every person shall be paid what he earned, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly” (*al-Baqara* 280-281).

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[1] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, pp. 254-255.

This hadith also includes giving the one in debt charity or a gift to help him pay off his debts. One may also extend him another loan so that he may pay off his current loan and have more time to pay off his new loan.

There are numerous hadith related to this topic that also demonstrate the emphasis that Islam places on such behavior among brothers. For example, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) also said,

كَانَ تَاجِرٌ يُدَايِنُ النَّاسَ فَإِذَا رَأَى مُعْسِرًا قَالَ لِفِتْيَانِهِ تَجَاوَزُوا عَنْهُ لَعَلَّ اللَّهَ أَنْ يَتَجَاوَزَ
عَنَّا فَتَجَاوَزَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ

“There was a trader who used to give loans to the people. If he noticed that one was in straitened circumstances, he would tell his boy [working for him], ‘Excuse him so that Allah may overlook [and forgive our sins] for us.’ Therefore, Allah overlooked [his sins] and forgave him.” (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

Al-Bukhari and Muslim also record that the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated,

يَقُولُ مَاتَ رَجُلٌ فَقِيلَ لَهُ قَالَ كُنْتُ أُبَايِعُ النَّاسَ فَأَتَجَوَّزُ عَنِ الْمُوسِرِ وَأُخَفِّفُ عَنِ
الْمُعْسِرِ فَغُفِرَ لَهُ

“A man died and he was spoken to [about his deeds] and he said, ‘I used to have business with the people and I would give time to the rich to repay and reduce the debt of the poor.’ Therefore, he was forgiven.”

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also stated,

مَنْ سَرَّهُ أَنْ يُنْجِيَهُ اللَّهُ مِنْ كُرَبِ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ فَلْيُنَفِّسْ عَنْ مُعْسِرٍ أَوْ يَضَعْ عَنْهُ

“Whoever would be pleased to have Allah save him from a distress on the Day of Resurrection should then relieve one in straitened circumstances or completely remove his debt.” (Recorded by Muslim.)

Ibn Uthaimeen points out that if a Muslim makes life very difficult for another Muslim by making him repay a debt that he simply cannot afford to pay, then Allah may also make life difficult for him both in this life and on the Day of Judgment.[1]

Al-Qaari points out that the reward for this kind of act is true regardless of whether the debtor was a non-Muslim or a Muslim.[2]

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[1] Ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 5, p. 26.

[2] Al-Qaari, vol. 1, p. 270.

"Whoever conceals [the faults of] a Muslim, Allah will conceal [his faults] in this life and the Hereafter."

This is another teaching of the Prophet (peace be upon him) that can be found in numerous of his hadith. For example, a hadith in *Sunan ibn Maajah* also states,

مَنْ سَتَرَ عَوْرَةَ أَخِيهِ الْمُسْلِمِ سَتَرَ اللَّهُ عَوْرَتَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَمَنْ كَشَفَ عَوْرَةَ أَخِيهِ الْمُسْلِمِ
كَشَفَ اللَّهُ عَوْرَتَهُ حَتَّى يَفْضَحَهُ بِهَا فِي بَيْتِهِ

"Whoever conceals his brother Muslim's private affairs will have Allah conceal his private affairs on the Day of Resurrection. And whoever uncovers his brother Muslim's private affairs will have Allah uncover his private affairs, to the point that He will expose what occurred in his house."[1]

There is also another hadith in which the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) stated,

يَا مَعْشَرَ مَنْ آمَنَ بِلِسَانِهِ وَلَمْ يَدْخُلِ الإِيمَانُ قَلْبَهُ لا تَغْتَابُوا الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَلا تَتَّبِعُوا عَوْرَاتِهِمْ
فَإِنَّهُ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ عَوْرَاتِهِمْ يَتَّبِعُ اللَّهُ عَوْرَتَهُ وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعِ اللَّهُ عَوْرَتَهُ يَفْضَحْهُ فِي بَيْتِهِ

"O gathering who believe with their tongues but faith has yet to enter into their hearts, do not backbite the Muslims. And do not search for their private matters. Whoever searches for their private matters will have Allah follow up his private matters. And whose private matters Allah follows, He will expose him even [if his act were done] in his house."[2]

One of the early scholars stated, "I came across a people who had no [known] shortcomings. However, they would mention the shortcomings of the people and so then the people mentioned the shortcomings they had. I came across another people who had [known] shortcomings but they refrained from speaking about the shortcomings of the people. Therefore, because of that, their shortcomings were forgotten."[3]

In general, a true believer would not like the mistakes and faults of others to be broadcast about. If a person made a mistake, it is not good that his sin be told to everyone and he be made a spectacle. When a person is happy with such events, it is a sign that his faith has a shortcoming. Allah is definitely not pleased with such a situation as He has said in the Quran,

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[1] Recorded by ibn Maajah. Al-Hilaali (*Eeqaadh*, p. 493) says that its chain has some weakness to it but it has supporting evidence that makes it *sahih.* It seems that al-Albaani used to consider it weak and included it in his *Dhaeef al-Jaami al-Sagheer*. However, he must have changed his mind concerning this hadith as he included it in *Sahih Sunan ibn Maajah*. See al-Albaani, *Sahih Sunan ibn Maajah*, vol. 2, p. 79.

[2] Recorded by Ahmad and Abu Dawood. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih.* See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 2, pp. 1322-1323.

[3] Quoted by ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 291.

إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ يُحِبُّونَ أَن تَشِيعَ ٱلۡفَٰحِشَةُ فِى ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ لَهُمۡ عَذَابٌ
أَلِيمٌ فِى ٱلدُّنۡيَا وَٱلۡأَخِرَةِۚ

"Verily, those who like that lewd sinful acts should be propagated among those who believe, they will have a painful torment in this world and in the Hereafter" (*al-Noor* 19).

Allah says in the Quran,

إِنَّا عَرَضۡنَا ٱلۡأَمَانَةَ عَلَى ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلۡأَرۡضِ وَٱلۡجِبَالِ فَأَبَيۡنَ أَن يَحۡمِلۡنَهَا
وَأَشۡفَقۡنَ مِنۡهَا وَحَمَلَهَا ٱلۡإِنسَٰنُۖ إِنَّهُۥ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا

"Truly, We did offer the Trust (moral responsibility) to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they declined to bear it and were afraid of it. But man bore it. Verily, he was unjust [to himself] and ignorant [of its results]" (*al-Ahzaab* 72).

Ibn Uthaimeen points out that all humans— except for those humans whom Allah protects from this by giving them knowledge and righteousness— have the characteristics of injustice to themselves and ignorance. Out of injustice to himself, a person knows that something is wrong and harmful to himself but he still does it. Secondly, people also do things ignorantly, not knowing what is right or wrong. Therefore, by their nature, all humans are going to have some faults, shortcomings and mistakes. So a Muslim should conceal his brother's faults and not inform others of them, unless he must do so out of necessity. The sinful brother may have temporarily yielded to his desires or did something wrong without realizing how wrong it was. But the person who notices those mistakes in others most likely also has his own mistakes and shortcomings. He would not like others to know when he makes mistakes and, therefore, he should not spread the mistakes of others. If he, for example, sees someone lying or cheating in his business transactions, instead of publicly announcing that, he should go to the person and advise him to change his ways. If he does so, that should be the end of the matter and there is no need to inform others of his mistake (unless they have been injured by his acts). If he does not change his ways, then one may be forced to warn others about him.[1]

Those Whose Sins Should be Concealed

Obviously, everybody commits sins and has faults. Everyone should love that Allah would conceal those faults and not reveal them to others. Part of Allah's concealing of a fault is his overlooking it and excusing it. If a person is desirous of that reward, he should not expose the slips and faults of his brother Muslims. He should not speak about them and he should not mention them to others. But does this ruling apply to every Muslim?

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[1] Ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 5, pp. 5-6.

First, it must be noted that this hadith is giving a recommendation and not a command. Al-Haitami states that there is a consensus that if somebody witnesses a sin and he does not conceal that sin but he reports that action to the proper authorities, he is not committing a sin by not concealing the act. It would have been better or preferred for him to have concealed that act but there is no sin on him for reporting such an act.[1]

Second, there are two types of people. One type is known to be religious, performs the obligatory and recommended acts and, in general, remains away from what is forbidden. A second type is one who is known to openly and brazenly commit sins and acts that are forbidden by the *shareeah.* In the light of the teachings of this hadith, the action with respect to each type is different.

As for the first type of people— the religious ones who are not known for committing sins— if a person witnesses such a one committing a sin, he should conceal it on his behalf. Everyone is prone to make mistakes one time or another and there is no need for a person's life or reputation to be ruined because of one mistake that he has made. Allah willing, if a Muslim conceals the sin of such a brother, Allah will conceal for him his sins and forgive them. Allah will conceal them for him in this life and will conceal them and forgive them in the Hereafter.

However, the following conditions must be met for this approach to be followed:[2]

(1) The sin that the person committed must be one related to the "rights of Allah" and not the rights of mankind. In other words, if a Muslim witnessed another pious Muslim sampling alcohol for the first time, he may, if he so wills, conceal that sin for the Muslim because it does not harm anyone else. However, if a Muslim witnessed another pious Muslim stealing something from somebody else, then he cannot remain silent because another individual's rights have been violated.

(2) The sin must have been already finished. In other words, if a person is committing a sin at the present moment in front of another Muslim, he must put a stop to that sin, even if it means he must tell others about it. In the example above, he should try to stop the person from drinking and even ask others to help him. However, if he comes and the person had just finished the drink and put the glass down, then he may conceal his fault.

(3) The person whose fault is being concealed must be a religious person who is known for performing the obligatory deeds and is not known

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[1] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 256.

[2] Cf., al-Mudaabaghi, p. 256.

whatsoever for performing evil deeds. In other words, it must have been a slip on his part and almost everyone is bound to slip some time.

(4) The concealment must not be in a situation where one has been called to be a witness to what has occurred. It also must not be a case where one has to testify to the integrity of a witness or of a narrator of reports. In those cases, the person does not have the right to conceal the other person's faults.

(5) The benefit of concealing the person's sin must outweigh the benefit of letting his sin be known. If it is better for a person's sin to be known, it should not be concealed. According to ibn Uthaimeen, if the benefit and the harm seem to be the same in both cases, it would be best to conceal the sin.[1]

As al-Bugha and Mistu point out, this does not mean that one does not advise the person and remind him of Allah. He should be reminded. He should be told not to repeat that sin that he has committed and so forth. This is part of the obligatory *naseehah* (sincere advice) that every Muslim should make toward his brother.[2]

According to ibn Rajab, included in this category of those whose sins should be concealed is a person who comes, full of repentance and sorrow, asking for the prescribed punishment to be implemented on him without explicitly stating what sin he has committed. He should not be asked to admit to his crime but instead he should be told to repent privately and conceal his sin. This was the practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him). The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not ask Maaiz what sin he committed when he came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) asking to be punished.[3]

Interceding on Behalf of Righteous Muslims

If a righteous Muslim who is not known for committing sins should blunder and commit a mistake, the others should keep his mistake concealed. Furthermore, if the mistake concerned another's right, they should intercede on behalf of the pious Muslim. In other words, they should convince the one who was wronged to forgive his brother, to overlook his mistake and not to take the matter to the authorities and press charges. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated,

اشْفَعُوا تُؤْجَرُوا

"Intercede [on each other's behalf] and you will be rewarded." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) sated,

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[1] Ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 5, p. 15.

[2] Al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 291.

[3] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 292.

أَقِيلُوا ذَوِي الْهَيْئَاتِ عَثَرَاتِهِمْ إِلاَّ الْحُدُودَ

"Overlook the slips of the righteous and pious people, except in matters concerning which there is a prescribed penalty."[1]

Another hadith states that the cloak of Safwaan ibn Umayyah was stolen. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) ordered that the hand of its thief be cut off. Safwaan told the Prophet (peace be upon him), "This is not what I want. It is charity for him." The Prophet (peace be upon him) then told him,

فَهَلاَّ كَانَ هَذَا قَبْلَ أَنْ تَأْتِيَنِي بِهِ

"Why did you not do that before he was brought to me?"[2]

So, if the sin that the person has committed has reached the authorities, and the matter is no longer a private matter between two citizens, for example, then there is no longer any room for intercession. It happened during the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) that a woman had stolen something. The Quraish were concerned about the woman. They, therefore, asked Usaamah ibn Zaid, the beloved of the Prophet (peace be upon him), to speak to the Prophet (peace be upon him) on her behalf. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated,

أَتَشْفَعُ فِي حَدٍّ مِنْ حُدُودِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ قَامَ فَاخْتَطَبَ ثُمَّ قَالَ إِنَّمَا أَهْلَكَ الَّذِينَ قَبْلَكُمْ أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا إِذَا سَرَقَ فِيهِمُ الشَّرِيفُ تَرَكُوهُ وَإِذَا سَرَقَ فِيهِمُ الضَّعِيفُ أَقَامُوا عَلَيْهِ الْحَدَّ وَايْمُ اللَّهِ لَوْ أَنَّ فَاطِمَةَ بِنْتَ مُحَمَّدٍ سَرَقَتْ لَقَطَعْتُ يَدَهَا

"Do you intercede regarding the prescribed punishments of Allah?" Then he stood and stated in a speech, "Verily, the people before you were destroyed: When a honorable person among them would steal, they would leave him; and if a poor person would steal, they would apply the punishment to him. By Allah, if Fatimah the daughter of Muhammad were to steal, I would cut her hand off." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

Those who are Not Deserving of Intercession

The second category of people are those who openly and repeatedly commit sins. They are known for committing such sins and they do not actually even care what anyone says about them and their sins. This person is not deserving of having his sins concealed. In fact, al-Haitami states it is a must that his sins not be concealed. Instead, others should be told about him so that they may take their precautions against him. Concealing his sins will just give him the opportunity or encouragement to do even more sins. Furthermore, he should be taken to the authorities to be dealt with in the proper manner to try to curb his evil.[1]

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[1] Recorded by Ahmad and Abu Dawood. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 1, p. 260.

[2] Recorded by al-Nasai and ibn Maajah. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Sahih Sunan al-Nasaai*, vol. 3, p. 1007.

Al-Hasan al-Basri stated that there is no such thing as backbiting with respect to such people.[2] Obviously, if a person is openly committing such sins he could not possible care— or he does not have the right to object— if people mention those sins behind his back. According to ibn Rajab, it is permissible to search into the affairs of such people if they are accused of committing specific crimes.[3] This view is based on the Prophet's statement after punishing a man for illegal sexual intercourse, recorded in *al-Bukhari* and *Muslim*, "O Unais, go to that woman and if she confesses her crime, have her stoned to death."

According to Imam Malik, no one should even step in and try to intercede on such a person's behalf. Instead, the process should be left until he is taken to the authorities and given the proper punishment.[4]

"Allah is helping the servant [5] as long as the servant is helping his brother."

Some of the virtues of helping one another and fulfilling each others' needs were discussed in the commentary to Hadith Number 25 and Hadith Number 26.

In this particular hadith, this is another example of being rewarded in a manner similar to the nature of one's deed. However, the believer should ponder over this particular example. If Allah is helping a person, is there anyone or anything that can repel Allah's help? Is there any greater help than the help that can come from Allah? How can one achieve that magnificent help? It is by turning to his brethren and helping them. As he helps his brothers, Allah will help him.

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[1] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 257.

[2] Quoted in ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 293.

[3] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 293.

[4] Quoted in al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 257. It is said that Imam Ahmad did not like taking even evildoers to the authorities because the authorities would either not perform the prescribed punishment or they would go beyond what is stated by the law. (See ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 293; al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 257.) However that view is based on issues that are different from those being discussed here.

[5] The way the hadith is stated puts an emphasis on the fact that the help is in or with the servant himself. The hadith did not actually state, "Allah is helping the servant in that" but it states that the help is, in essence, placed in the servant. This is a way of emphasizing the amount and type of help that such a servant receives. Cf., al-Teebi, vol. 2, p. 665.

This also gives a picture of what the ideal Islamic society should be like. It is a society in which its members help and assist one another. However, they help and assist one another only in certain deeds and, obviously, not in other deeds. Allah has stated,

وَتَعَاوَنُوا۟ عَلَى ٱلْبِرِّ وَٱلتَّقْوَىٰ ۖ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا۟ عَلَى ٱلْإِثْمِ وَٱلْعُدْوَٰنِ ۚ وَٱتَّقُوا۟
ٱللَّهَ ۖ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ شَدِيدُ ٱلْعِقَابِ

"Help one another in acts of piety and righteousness. And do not assist one another in acts of sinfulness and transgression. And be aware of Allah. Verily, Allah is severe in punishment" (*al-Maaidah* 2). Hence, the different members of society should be working together and helping one another for everything that is good and righteous. They should help each other fulfill their needs and they should assist each other to make life easier for all.

Another hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) demonstrates the importance of helping and serving one's brothers. Anas narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his Companions were on a journey. During that journey, some of the Companions were fasting while the others were not. Those who were fasting became weak and were not able to perform the chores that one needs to perform while traveling, such as preparing the food, feeding the animals and so forth. Therefore, those who were not fasting tended to the needs of everyone. Although fasting is a deed that is extremely pleasing to Allah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated about their situation,

ذَهَبَ الْمُفْطِرُونَ الْيَوْمَ بِالأَجْرِ

"Those who were not fasting took all of the reward today." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.) The Prophet's statement was an exaggerated statement to demonstrate that those who did not fast possibly received even more reward than the people who were fasting. This is because they were assisting and helping their brothers who were in need. Thus, their reward was very great.

In fact, even after becoming the rulers, Abu Bakr and Umar used to continue to serve the people and help them fulfill their needs. Among the Arabs, it was considered very bad for women to milk the animals. Therefore, before becoming the ruler, Abu Bakr started the practice of milking the animals for the womenfolk in his area who did not have men present to milk for them. After becoming the ruler, he continued to do that on their behalf. Umar also used to deliver water to the elderly widows even after he became the ruler.[1]

Al-Bugha and Mistu state that assisting one's brother is not restricted to assisting him by doing some deed on his behalf. It also includes the other deeds previously referred to in this hadith, such as rescuing him from a distressful situation, relieving his debt and interceding on his behalf. One should use one's physical and material means as well as other means, such as reputation and authority, to help one's brother.[1]

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[1] See ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 295.

"Whoever follows a path in order to seek knowledge thereby, Allah will make easy for him, due to it, a path to Paradise."

According to most of the commentators, what is meant by knowledge here is the knowledge of the religion.[2] This is the most important type of knowledge that one can attain. This interpretation seems to be correct as it is that knowledge that most seemingly will lead one to the Path to Paradise. Secular knowledge may not necessarily lead to that path as can be seen from the many scientists and scholars who have no fear of Allah or knowledge of the path to Paradise.

The meaning of the Prophet's statement, as ibn Rajab mentioned, includes both the actual physical following of a path in order to seek knowledge as well as the non-physical means by which one attains knowledge. The first category would include walking or riding to the lectures or places of the scholars to meet with them and learn from them. The latter category would include actions like reading, studying, memorizing, researching, pondering and so forth. All of these are part of the "paths" by which one attains knowledge.[3]

The words, "Allah will make easy for him, due to it, the path to Paradise," could imply, as ibn Rajab states, that Allah will make the attaining and seeking of knowledge easy upon him and it is that knowledge that is the path to take him to Paradise. In this way, it is similar to Allah's statement in the Quran,

وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا ٱلْقُرْءَانَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِن مُّدَّكِرٍ

"And We have indeed made the Quran easy to understand and remember, is there then anyone who will remember [and receive admonition]?" (*al-Qamar* 17).[4]

Another interpretation, also given by ibn Rajab, is that Allah will make it easy for the seeker of knowledge, who has a sincere intention to please Allah, to benefit from his knowledge and to act on the basis of his knowledge. In this way, it will be a type of "cause" for his guidance and it will lead him to Paradise.[1]

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[1] Al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 297.

[2] Cf., ibn Daqeeq al-Eid, *Sharh*, p. 95; al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 259; Sultaan, p. 316. Taataay (p. 355) argues that semantically the word "knowledge" in this hadith is in the *nakirah* (indefinite noun) and, therefore, applies to any type of knowledge. He says that secular knowledge or science also leads to certainty in the belief in the one God and Creator. Hence, that type of knowledge must also be included here. Allah knows best, but it seems that the stronger interpretation is that it is in reference to religious knowledge and the knowledge regarding Allah. Al-Qaari (vol. 1, p. 270) gives a different interpretation of why the word "knowledge" is in the indefinite: In this way, it comprises all religious knowledge, including a large portion or a minor portion, as long as it is sought with the correct intention of getting closer to Allah.

[3] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 297.

[4] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 297.

Furthermore, Allah may make other knowledge easy for the person to obtain and benefit from and this will lead him to Paradise. It is said that if a person acts on the basis of his knowledge, Allah will bestow upon him new knowledge that he did not possess. The evidence for this concept is in the following verses of the Quran:

وَيَزِيدُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱهْتَدَوْا۟ هُدًى ۗ

"And Allah increases in guidance those who walk aright" (*Maryam* 76);

وَٱلَّذِينَ ٱهْتَدَوْا۟ زَادَهُمْ هُدًى وَءَاتَىٰهُمْ تَقْوَىٰهُمْ

"While as for those who accept guidance, He increases their guidance and bestows on them their piety" (*Muhammad* 17).

The hadith may also be a reference to making the physical path to Paradise in the Hereafter easier for the person. Knowledge shows the straightest and shortest path to Allah and His pleasure. Whoever follows the path that is lit by the light of true knowledge is following a path that directs him to Allah's pleasure, without any curves to it. In the Hereafter, he will easily be able to follow the Path to Paradise or the bridge over the Hell-fire.[2]

In fact, the path of knowledge— when that knowledge is truly applied— is the only path that leads directly to Allah. It is the path of Allah's revelation, of the knowledge that He revealed to His messengers. In this life, it guides the person out of the darkness of ignorance and confusion. In fact, for this reason, the Book of Allah has been called "light," because it leads out of darkness into light. Allah says,

قَدْ جَآءَكُم مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ نُورٌ وَكِتَـٰبٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١٥﴾ يَهْدِى بِهِ ٱللَّهُ مَنِ
ٱتَّبَعَ رِضْوَٰنَهُۥ سُبُلَ ٱلسَّلَـٰمِ وَيُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ ٱلظُّلُمَـٰتِ إِلَى ٱلنُّورِ بِإِذْنِهِۦ
وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَىٰ صِرَٰطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ

"Indeed, there has come to you from Allah a light and a plain Book wherewith Allah guides all those who seek His Good Pleasure to ways of peace, and He brings them out of darkness by His Will unto light and guides them to the Straight Way" (*al-Maaidah* 15-16).

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Cf., Sultaan, p. 317.

Hence, the one who seeks knowledge is following the best and easiest path to Allah. Therefore, the path to Paradise will be made easy for him in both this life and the Hereafter.

Actually, there is no way for a person to know what the path to Paradise is except through knowledge. What is meant here by "knowledge," again, is that knowledge which is contained in the books Allah revealed and which His messengers taught mankind. If a person is ignorant of that knowledge, he, in reality, has no knowledge of the path to Allah or the path to Paradise.

The reason true knowledge should lead one to Paradise is that true knowledge increases one's knowledge of Allah. This knowledge leads to love of Allah as well as fear and hope in Allah.[1] It leads one to act in ways that are pleasing to Allah. In fact, Allah has said about the people who have that true knowledge,

إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى ٱللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ ٱلْعُلَمَٰٓؤُاْ

"It is only those who have knowledge among His slaves who fear Allah" (*Faatir* 28).

The Concept of Seeking Knowledge

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

مَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ بِهِ خَيْرًا يُفَقِّهْهُ فِي الدِّينِ وَإِنَّمَا الْعِلْمُ بِالتَّعَلُّمِ

"For whoever Allah desires good, He gives him understanding of the religion. And, verily, knowledge comes through learning."[2] The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said,

طَلَبُ الْعِلْمِ فَرِيضَةٌ عَلَى كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ

"Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim."[3] In the hadith under discussion here, the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated,

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[1] It is said that knowledge is of two types: knowledge of the tongue and knowledge of the heart. The knowledge of the tongue is that knowledge which the person knows and can read out to anyone but it does not have any real effect on his actions. The knowledge that has the real effect is the knowledge of the heart, by which one fears Allah, loves Allah and puts his hope in Allah. The knowledge of the tongue is a proof against the person on the Day of Judgment while the knowledge of the heart is a proof for the person on the Day of Judgment.

[2] Recorded by al-Bukhari in *mualaq* form.

[3] Recorded by al-Baihaqi and numerous others. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 727. Knowledge is of two types: knowledge which is obligatory upon every individual and knowledge which is obligatory upon the community as a whole. Concerning the first type, every Muslim must know what to believe in (in general), how to

مَنْ سَلَكَ طَرِيقًا يَلْتَمِسُ فِيهِ عِلْمًا

" Whoever follows a path in order to seek knowledge by it..."

When one studies these hadith and others similar to them, one important conclusion is clear: Knowledge does not come to a person without effort. The person must seek that knowledge. In reality, therefore, he must sacrifice something in order to gain that knowledge. Usually, he must sacrifice his time and, often times, he must sacrifice some of his wealth in order to attain that knowledge. When he does that, then Allah makes it easy upon him to attain that knowledge and follow it to Paradise.

The most knowledgeable Muslims of all time were the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). They set the example of what it means to strive and sacrifice for the sake of knowledge.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) made a special supplication for ibn Abbaas, that Allah grant him knowledge and understanding of the Quran. Yet by what means did ibn Abbaas attain that knowledge? Was it through sacrifice and valuing knowledge or was it by him expecting that knowledge would come to him? He would sit outside of the doors of the older Companions waiting for them to come out of their houses, putting up with the heat and the hot wind. His purpose was to ask them about hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) which they knew better than him, because they were older during the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him). When they would come out to him, they would say, "Why didn't you send someone for us?" He would reply, "No, it is more proper that I come to you."[1]

Another example is Abu Huraira. The Prophet (peace be upon him) made a supplication that Abu Huraira acted upon. That supplication meant that he would not forget any hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) afterwards. However, it is recorded of Abu Huraira that he would divide the night into three portions. One portion was for sleep, one for prayer and the other for studying hadith.[2]

Imam al-Bukhari recorded in his *Sahih* that Jaabir ibn Abdullah traveled for one month to get a single hadith from Abdullah ibn Unais. In a version recorded by al-Tabaraani, it states that Jaabir said, "I used to hear a hadith on the authority of the Prophet about retribution and the one who

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pray, how to fast and so forth. Everyone has to know these things because everyone has to perform these acts. It is required for a Muslim to seek this type of knowledge. If he has the ability to do so but he does not do so, he is sinful. Knowledge which is obligatory upon the community as a whole would include more detailed knowledge concerning those matters which not everyone is required to know as well as knowledge of matters that do not concern every individual in the community. Cf., al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 299.

[1] Cf., Mohammad Mustafa Azami, *Studies in Early Hadith Literature* (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1978), p. 40.

[2] Muhammad Ijaaj al-Khateeb, *Abu Hurairah: Raawiyah al-Islaam* (Maktabah Wahbah, 1982), p. 126.

narrated that hadith [directly from the Prophet] was in Egypt, so I bought a camel and traveled to Egypt..."[1]

The Companion Abu Ayyoob traveled all the way to Egypt to ask Uqba ibn Amr about one hadith. He told Uqba that only he and Uqba were left who had heard that particular hadith directly from the Prophet (peace be upon him). After hearing the hadith his business was completed in Egypt and he returned to Madinah.[2]

Furthermore, the Follower Yahya ibn Abu Katheer said, "Knowledge is not acquired with laziness." (Recorded by Muslim.)

Unfortunately, nowadays, too many people want knowledge to be served to them on a silver platter. They want everything according to what is convenient and easy for them. They are not very much willing to sacrifice in order to attain that knowledge. If there is going to be a lecture, it has to be at a time and place convenient for the person otherwise he will not attend. Many times, people will not even give up their time for shopping in order to benefit from a visiting speaker's lecture. If there is a book for sale on Islam, they will only buy it if it is cheap— much cheaper than any other book that they could purchase today, either on computers, cooking or whatever. Is it any wonder, with this kind of attitude, that the number of scholars and the number of people who have a relatively deep knowledge of Islam are very few today? This knowledge is something very precious. It will lead a person to great heights in Paradise, Allah willing. Therefore, no one should expect to get it without a corresponding willingness to sacrifice and strive for it.

"No people gather together in a house of the houses of Allah, reciting the Book of Allah and studying it among themselves..."

After mentioning the importance of seeking knowledge, the Prophet (peace be upon him) mentioned one of the greatest means by which knowledge is attained: the reading and study of the Quran. This also implies that if one seriously reads and studies the Quran, the path to Paradise will be made easy for him.

This hadith demonstrates the great blessings that come about through the reading and study of the Quran. Indeed, in another hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated,

خَيْرُكُمْ مَنْ تَعَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ وَعَلَّمَهُ

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[1] Ibn Hajr says that this version has a good chain. See ibn Hajr, *Fath al-Bari*, (Dar al-Ifta), vol. 1, p. 174.

[2] Al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadi, *Al-Rihlah fi Talab al-Hadeeth* (Beirut: Daar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1975), p. 118-120.

"The best of you is one who learns the Quran and teaches it." (Recorded by al-Bukhari.)

The purpose of the Quran is not simply its recitation. The purpose of reading it is to ponder over its meaning and to understand it. Allah has said,

كِتَٰبٌ أَنزَلۡنَٰهُ إِلَيۡكَ مُبَٰرَكٞ لِّيَدَّبَّرُوٓاْ ءَايَٰتِهِۦ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُوْلُواْ ٱلۡأَلۡبَٰبِ

"[This is] a Book that We have revealed to you, full of blessings, that they may ponder over its verses and that men of understanding may remember" (*Saad* 29).

However, the purpose of understanding it is to apply it. As was noted earlier, the Quran is either a proof for a person or a proof against a person. When a person understands it and applies it, it takes him along the path to Paradise.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated, "No people." The way that he said it, in the indefinite, implies that the blessings mentioned here accrue to any people who do this act. They do not have to be scholars or pious people or whatever. Any group of people who come together and do this act will receive these blessings, as long as their intention is sincere for the sake of Allah.[1]

Reading the Quran is the Best form of *Dhikr* ("Remembrance of Allah")

There are numerous verses of the Quran and hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) demonstrating the importance of *dhikr* or making remembrance of Allah. For example, Allah has said,

ٱتۡلُ مَآ أُوحِيَ إِلَيۡكَ مِنَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ وَأَقِمِ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَۖ إِنَّ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ تَنۡهَىٰ عَنِ
ٱلۡفَحۡشَآءِ وَٱلۡمُنكَرِۗ وَلَذِكۡرُ ٱللَّهِ أَكۡبَرُۗ وَٱللَّهُ يَعۡلَمُ مَا تَصۡنَعُونَ

"Recite what has been revealed to you of the Book and establish the prayers. Verily, the prayer prevents one from great sins and evil deeds. And the remembering of Allah is indeed greater. And Allah knows what you do" (*al-Ankaboot* 45). The remembrance of Allah should have a great effect on a person, as it should drive him to worship and obey Allah.

However, in applying those verses and hadith concerning the virtues of *dhikr*, some people seem to forget that the best form of *dhikr* is the reciting of the Book of Allah. Allah has said,

وَمَا عَلَّمۡنَٰهُ ٱلشِّعۡرَ وَمَا يَنۢبَغِي لَهُۥٓۚ إِنۡ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكۡرٞ وَقُرۡءَانٞ مُّبِينٞ

"And We have not taught him [the Prophet (peace be upon him)] poetry, nor is it suitable for him. This is only a reminder (*dhikr*) and a plain Quran" (*Yaseen* 69). Allah also says,

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[1] Cf., ibn Daqeeq al-Eid, *Sharh*, p. 95.

هَٰذَا ذِكْرٌ وَإِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ لَحُسْنَ مَـَٔابٍ

"This is a reminder (*dhikr*). And verily for the pious is a good final return" (*Saad* 49).

How and Where to Study the Quran

In this hadith, there is a particular reference to gathering together to read and "study" the Quran in one of the houses of Allah.

According to al-Teebi, the Prophet (peace be upon him) explicitly said, "houses of Allah," instead of "mosque" so that all of the places that have been built with the intention of pleasing Allah and spreading His religion would be included in the reward mentioned in this hadith. In other words, it is also inclusive of the Quran schools and other places which are not mosques but were built with the intention that people would come there to study and read the Quran.[1]

Others say that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not intend to imply anything by his specific mention of "the houses of Allah." The houses of Allah were mentioned by the Prophet (peace be upon him) because, in general, those are the places in which the Quran is read and studied. However, this does not mean that the reward mentioned by the Prophet (peace be upon him) just applies to those houses. Instead, it applies to any place in which people gather together to read and study the Quran.[2]

In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) also explicitly mentioned the gathering together to recite and study the Quran. According to the majority of the scholars, to study the Quran in a group in the mosque itself is a preferred way of studying the Quran.[3]

However, it is narrated that Imam Malik disapproved of such an act. But his followers have interpreted his statement as referring to a specific type of group study, where the group as a whole recites the Quran together simultaneously. In this way, the teacher cannot tell whether or not they are all properly reciting it as he may not be able to hear some of the voices very well. This was not the practice of the early scholars. Instead, everyone should read a portion of the Quran, one at a time in a clear and comprehensible fashion.[4]

According to Taataay, the proper fashion to study the Quran which this hadith is referring to is the manner in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) learned the Quran from the angel Gabriel. This is where the teacher first recites the Quran to the student and then the student repeats what the teacher has recited. This is Taataay's interpretation of the hadith of ibn Abbaas recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim in which he stated that during every Ramadhan, the angel Gabriel would "study" (يدارسه) the Quran with the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).[1] However, that is not what the hadith of ibn Abbaas explicitly states. Therefore, it is difficult to be definitive with respect to that conclusion.

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[1] Al-Teebi, vol. 2, p. 665.
[2] Cf., al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 259.
[3] Cf., al-Nawawi, *Sharh Saheeh*, vol. 17, p. 21.
[4] This topic is discussed in detail by Taataay, pp. 332-333.

Al-Teebi says that the word translated here as, "study," includes all of the aspects by which one understands the Quran. This includes the learning and teaching of the Quran itself. It also includes the study of the commentary and explanation of the meaning of the verses.[2]

Al-Teebi's interpretation seems to be feasible. In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) mentioned both the reading of the Quran and its study. There must be some difference between the two facets. The first aspect is the actual reciting of the words of the Quran, which is a must. The second aspect is the effort to understand what those words mean and how one must apply them in one's life.

The Results of Reading and Studying the Quran

This hadith mentions, implicitly or explicitly, the five very important results that accrue from reading the Quran:

(1) Reading and studying the Quran is a path to gaining knowledge. Therefore, when a group of Muslims read and study the Quran, Allah will make the path to Paradise easy for them.

(2) When people read and study the Quran, tranquillity is descended upon them.[3] In a hadith in both *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*, it is recorded that a Companion was reciting *Surah al-Kahf* when clouds surrounded him and continued coming closer and closer to him. His horse was becoming fearful at the sight. In the morning, he mentioned that to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and he said,

تِلْكَ السَّكِينَةُ تَنَزَّلَتْ بِالْقُرْآنِ

"That is the tranquillity that descends with the Quran."

This is a special feeling of calm and peace when a person remembers Allah or recites the Quran. The heart becomes at rest and peace with itself. In fact, this is the only real way for the heart to become truly full of peace and tranquillity. Allah says in the Quran,

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[1] Taataay, p. 349.

[2] Al-Teebi, vol. 1, p. 665.

[3] Qaadhi Iyaadh understood this as referring to "mercy". However, most commentators refute this idea because mercy is mentioned in the following phrase of this hadith. See al-Nawawi, *Sharh Saheeh*, vol. 17, p. 21.

ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ وَتَطۡمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُم بِذِكۡرِ ٱللَّهِۗ أَلَا بِذِكۡرِ ٱللَّهِ تَطۡمَئِنُّ ٱلۡقُلُوبُ

“Those who believed and whose hears find rest and tranquillity in the remembrance of Allah: verily, it is in the remembrance of Allah that hearts do find rest and tranquillity” (*al-Rad* 28).

(3) When reading and studying the Quran, the Muslims are covered with mercy. The meaning of this phrase is that they are literally covered and completely enveloped by Allah’s mercy. The reading and study of the Quran is an act of piety. And Allah has said in the Quran,

إِنَّ رَحۡمَتَ ٱللَّهِ قَرِيبٞ مِّنَ ٱلۡمُحۡسِنِينَ

“Verily, the mercy of Allah is close to the pious doers of good” (*al-Araaf* 56).

(4) The angels surround those who read and study the Quran. Al-Haitami states that the angels of mercy and blessings surround them and cover the spaces between them and the lowest heaven, as is mentioned in some other hadith. They do this to listen to the words of remembrance and to invoke blessings upon those who are remembering Allah. They protect those people from any form of evil. They also do not leave any opening for the Satan to enter.[1]

(5) Allah mentions those who read and study the Quran to those in His presence. Al-Sindi wrote that the One making the mention is the greatest One and He is mentioning them to a very great creation, the noble angels. If this were the only honor bestowed upon those who remember Allah, this would be sufficient for them.[2]

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

يَقُولُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى أَنَا عِنْدَ ظَنِّ عَبْدِي بِي وَأَنَا مَعَهُ إِذَا ذَكَرَنِي فَإِنْ ذَكَرَنِي فِي نَفْسِهِ
ذَكَرْتُهُ فِي نَفْسِي وَإِنْ ذَكَرَنِي فِي مَلَإٍ ذَكَرْتُهُ فِي مَلَإٍ خَيْرٍ مِنْهُمْ

“Allah has said, ‘I am as My servant expects of Me. I am with him when he mentions [or remembers] Me. If he remembers Me to himself, I mention him to Myself. If he mentions me to a gathering, I mention him to a gathering that is better than his.” (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.) Allah has also said,

فَٱذۡكُرُونِيٓ أَذۡكُرۡكُمۡ

“Therefore, remember Me, I will remember you” (*al-Baqara* 152). Allah’s mentioning of a slave is in reference to His mentioning that slave and praising him in the presence of the angels that are with Allah.[3]

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[1] Cf., ibn Daqeeq al-Eid, *Sharh*, p. 95; Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 260.

[2] Al-Sindi, *Sharh al-Arbaeen*, pp. 110-111.

[3] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 307.

These last four results of reading and studying the Quran actually occur with respect to every form of *dhikr* or remembrance of Allah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated,

لا يَقْعُدُ قَوْمٌ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ إِلاَّ حَفَّتْهُمُ الْمَلائِكَةُ وَغَشِيَتْهُمُ الرَّحْمَةُ وَنَزَلَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّكِينَةُ وَذَكَرَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِيمَنْ عِنْدَهُ

"No people sit together remembering Allah except that the angels surround them, mercy covers them, tranquillity descends upon them and Allah mentions them to those in His presence." (Recorded by Muslim.)

"Whoever is slowed by his deeds will not be hastened forward by his lineage."

All of mankind comes from the same source. Allah says,

يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ ٱتَّقُواْ رَبَّكُمُ ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَكُم مِّن نَّفْسٍ وَٰحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَآءً

"O mankind, fear your Lord who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and from them spread forth many men and women" (*al-Nisaa* 1). All people share this common lineage. And they have all been created for the same purpose and they are all expected to heed the guidance that has come from Allah.

In reality, there is nothing naturally or inborn that separates one human being from another. There is no difference, other than superficial ones, between a white man and a black man, an Arab or a non-Arab. The only thing that is going to distinguish them is their *taqwa* that is in their hearts and which is manifested in their deeds. Allah has said,

يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَـٰكُم مِّن ذَكَرٍ وَأُنثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَـٰكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَآئِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوٓاْ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ أَتْقَىٰكُمْ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

"O mankind, We have created you from a male and female and We have made you into nations and tribes, so that you may recognize one another. Verily, the most honorable of you with Allah is he who has the most *taqwa*. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware" (*al-Hujuraat* 13).

Furthermore, all humans will stand in front of Allah by themselves and alone. At that time, all of the worldly blood ties and relations will be forgotten and will mean nothing. Everyone will just care about themselves and be worried about themselves. They will not be coming to the aid of others. Allah describes that day in the following words:

فَإِذَا نُفِخَ فِي ٱلصُّورِ فَلَآ أَنسَابَ بَيۡنَهُمۡ يَوۡمَئِذٖ وَلَا يَتَسَآءَلُونَ

"Then, when the Trumpet is blown, there will be no kinship among them that Day, nor will they ask [about one another]" (*al-Muminoon* 101).

The only helpful factor for the person on that day will be the good deeds that he performed in this life.[1] Allah says,

وَلِكُلّٖ دَرَجَٰتٞ مِّمَّا عَمِلُواْۚ وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِغَٰفِلٍ عَمَّا يَعۡمَلُونَ

"For all there will be ranks according to what they did. And your Lord is not unaware of what they do" (*al-Anaam* 132).

If a person himself did not work for Paradise, then he is not going to be blessed with Paradise due to what others have done, no matter how close their blood relationship may be. Allah has said,

وَأَن لَّيۡسَ لِلۡإِنسَٰنِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَىٰ

"Man can have nothing but what he strives for" (*al-Najm* 39).

If the deeds are not there, one's lineage is not going to help the person whatsoever. This is true for the noblest lineage of mankind. In fact, when Allah revealed the verse,

وَأَنذِرۡ عَشِيرَتَكَ ٱلۡأَقۡرَبِينَ

"And warn your tribe of near kindred [O Muhammad]" (*al-Shuaraa* 214), the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) went to the top of the hillock of Safa and said,

يَا مَعْشَرَ قُرَيْشٍ اشْتَرُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ لا أُغْنِي عَنْكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا يَا بَنِي عَبْدِمَنَافٍ لا أُغْنِي عَنْكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا يَا عَبَّاسُ بْنَ عَبْدِالْمُطَّلِبِ لا أُغْنِي عَنْكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَيَا صَفِيَّةُ عَمَّةَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ لا أُغْنِي عَنْكِ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَيَا فَاطِمَةُ بِنْتَ مُحَمَّدٍ سَلِينِي مَا شِئْتِ مِنْ مَالِي لا أُغْنِي عَنْكِ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا

"O gathering of Quraish! Purchase your own souls for I cannot save you from Allah. Oh tribe of Abd Manaaf, I cannot save you from Allah. O Abbaas ibn Abdul-Muttalib, I cannot save you from Allah. O Safiyyah, the aunt of the Messenger of Allah, I cannot save you from Allah. O Fatima daughter of

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[1] Deeds without faith are of no avail. When the words "good deeds" are used, they imply a deed that is done with the proper faith and the proper intention of pleasing Allah.

Muhammad, ask of me what you will of my wealth but I cannot save you from Allah." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

What then are the deeds that a person should wish to have filling his record of deeds since his blood relations are not going to be able to come to his rescue? The Prophet (peace be upon him) has already alluded to such deeds. The person should help his brother when he is in need, he should rescue him from distressful situations, he should be forgiving when his brother is in dire circumstances and he should conceal his brother's sins. Furthermore, he should strive after knowledge and he should get with others to read and study the Quran. These are some of the most important acts that he can perform. If he performs these acts sincerely for the sake of Allah, then, regardless if he were from the noblest or the lowest of families, Allah will be pleased with him and Allah will enter him into Paradise.

Other Points Related to This Hadith

- As stated in the commentary above, the reward for an act is of a similar nature to the act itself. However, the mercy and grace of Allah is so great that the act itself cannot compare to the type of reward that Allah will give for it. For example, although relieving a brother's difficulty in this world is rewarded by Allah relieving one's own difficulty, there is no comparison between removing a worldly difficulty and a difficulty or hardship on the Day of Judgment. The latter, which is the reward for the act from Allah, is much greater and much more needed by the human than the former. This demonstrates how gracious and merciful Allah is. Every believer should consider and remember these facts. If he does so, this should make his heart softer and filled with love for Allah.
- Al-Baitaar points out that Muslim society is built upon two foundations, as is implied by this hadith: mutual support and knowledge. Muslims must help each other and relieve each others' suffering. But that must be done in accordance with what is correct and approved by the *shareeah.* Many times people of this world help each other but they help each other in actions that are not proper or which are acts of *dhulm* and wrongdoing. The only way to avoid that is by knowing what is correct and what are the proper actions to take.[1]
- A Muslim should help all others in what is righteous and good. However, a Muslim should never take part in anything or support anything that is evil and sinful. Therefore, if a person is begging a Muslim for money with which he wants to buy cigarettes or alcohol, the Muslim should not help him or give to that cause. Even if the beggar is the person's father or mother, he should not give him or her anything. This is because, in reality,

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[1] Al-Baitaar, p. 226.

he is not helping the person in anyway but he will be contributing to something which is an evil.[1]

- A Muslim's mind is not solely on dollars and cents of this world. First, when it comes to giving a loan, he must do so interest-free and he should never be thinking later about how much interest he is losing or how much value his money is losing because he has followed the teachings of Islam. Furthermore, when it comes to his brother's debt, he should be willing to be flexible and even forego the debt if he finds that his brother is truly not able to repay it. He should be more concerned for his brother and the Hereafter than for a few dollars. If he takes that approach, Allah may be so pleased with him that He forgives his sins in the same way that he forgave the person's debt.
- Al-Haitami states that the phrase, "Whoever alleviates [the situation of] one in dire straits who cannot repay his debt, Allah will alleviate his lot in both this world and the Hereafter," also applies to the scholar who answers a religious question for a layman. This is because the layman was in dire straits with respect to that question and it was the scholar who relieved him of his difficulty.[2]
- In the same way that it is not proper for a Muslim to demand his money back from a poor Muslim who honestly cannot afford to repay him, it is also a form of *dhulm* (wrongdoing) for a Muslim who can afford to repay his debt to delay in doing so. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has said,

  مَطْلُ الْغَنِيِّ ظُلْمٌ

  "The delaying of repayment by one who has the means is a form of *dhulm*." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)
- "Concealing a Muslim" may be in reference to either a spiritual or physical concealment. If a person is in need of clothing to cover his body properly, it is possible that the meaning of this hadith also applies to such a case. It may also include concealing a "spiritual shortcoming"; for example, when one is having a difficulty because he is not married, one helps him get married and thereby conceals his shortcoming.[3]
- If a person is known for his piety and religious knowledge, his writings and works should not be examined with a fine-tooth comb to find any mistakes or slips that he has made in his efforts. If he is mistaken in his *ijtihaad* on some point, this should not be made a public farce and the person should not be condemned due to a mistake or two.
- Especially in countries where the Islamic penalties are not invoked, if a person committed a crime that no one knows about (such as illegal sexual

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[1] Cf., ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 5, pp. 24-25.
[2] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 255.
[3] Cf., al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 256; al-Mudaabaghi, p. 256.

intercourse) and wishes to repent, he should repent privately between himself and his Lord. It is not necessary for him to go to the Muslim community and admit his sin to them. Instead, Allah concealed that sin and he should also conceal it and make a sincere repentance to Allah.

- This hadith has important implications for what can be called "Islamic media". It demonstrates that, in reality, there is no benefit in broadcasting every mistake and every crime that is committed in society. Nowadays, one small mistake by an otherwise good person could lead to his reputation being ruined forever in the media. Indeed, the constant and general depiction of sins and crimes could have a very negative impact as people begin to believe that everyone is committing sins and therefore there is nothing wrong if they also commit sins. Instead, the media has a heavy moral responsibility and obligation to present facts truthfully but within the light of the overall goals of Islamic society. One of these goals is to not broadcast the sins and mistakes of the pious people who have erred.
- Many of the commentators stressed the importance of having the proper intention upon seeking knowledge.[1] They say that although this condition is true for all deeds, it needs to be emphasized in the case of attaining knowledge because it is in this area that many people slip and do not have the proper intention. In fact, there is a hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) which states:

مَنْ طَلَبَ الْعِلْمَ لِيُجَارِيَ بِهِ الْعُلَمَاءَ أَوْ لِيُمَارِيَ بِهِ السُّفَهَاءَ أَوْ يَصْرِفَ بِهِ وُجُوهَ النَّاسِ
إِلَيْهِ أَدْخَلَهُ اللَّهُ النَّارَ

"Whoever seeks knowledge in order to compete with the scholars or to debate with the ignorant or to have people turn their faces to him will be entered by Allah into the Fire."[2]

- The example of coming together, reciting, learning and studying the Quran was set by the noblest of messengers and the noblest of angels. Al-Bukhari and Muslim record that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the Angel Gabriel would meet every Ramadhan to go over and recite the Quran. In the last year of the Prophet's life, they went over the Quran twice.
- One of the ways by which Satan gets to man is by making him believe that the righteousness or prestige of his lineage or his family is going to save him from destruction in the Hereafter. In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) made it clear that if a person's deeds are not sufficient to get him to Paradise, his lineage is definitely not going to take him to Paradise.

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[1] Cf., al-Nawawi, *Sharh Sahih*, vol. 17, p. 20.

[2] Recorded by al-Tirmidhi. According to al-Albaani, it is *hasan*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 1091.

- Al-Qaari points out that in line with what the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, that it is not lineage but one's deeds and *taqwa* that separates people, most of the early scholars whose names are still remembered today were from ex-slave families or client families to the larger, more noble tribes. Those people, with their non-distinctive lineage, are still remembered today and people pray for them when they mention their names. However, the people from that time who had the great and noble lineage have, for the most part, become something forgotten.

Summary of the Hadith

- The reward for deeds is of the same nature as the deeds themselves. Therefore, if a Muslim relieves his brother of some distress, Allah will relieve him of some greater distress in the Hereafter. If a person alleviates a person's debt, Allah will alleviate a difficult situation for him. If a person conceals his brothers' sins, Allah will conceal his sins. Indeed, if a Muslim is helping his brother in any way, then Allah will be helping him as long as he is helping his brother.
- The path to Paradise is made easy by seeking knowledge. Through knowledge one can recognize that path and can have the qualities in the heart that will lead him to follow that path.
- Gathering together to read and study the Quran is one of the most important means of attaining knowledge. It is a deed that is very pleasing to Allah and has many resultant benefits associated with it.
- If a person's deeds are not sufficient to earn him entrance into Paradise, his lineage, no matter how noble, will also not be able to assist him in any way.

Hadith #37

“Allah recorded the Good Deeds...”

عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا عَنْ رَسُوْلِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِيْمَا يَرْوِيْهِ عَنْ رَبِّهِ تَبارَكَ وَتَعَالَى قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَتَبَ الْحَسَنَاتِ وَالسَّيِّئَاتِ ثُمَّ بَيَّنَ ذَلِكَ فَمَنْ هَمَّ بِحَسَنَةٍ فَلَمْ يَعْمَلْهَا كَتَبَهَا اللَّهُ لَهُ عِنْدَهُ حَسَنَةً كَامِلَةً فَإِنْ هُوَ هَمَّ بِهَا فَعَمِلَهَا كَتَبَهَا اللَّهُ لَهُ عِنْدَهُ عَشْرَ حَسَنَاتٍ إِلَى سَبْعِ مِائَةِ ضِعْفٍ إِلَى أَضْعَافٍ كَثِيرَةٍ وَإِنْ هَمَّ بِسَيِّئَةٍ فَلَمْ يَعْمَلْهَا كَتَبَهَا اللَّهُ لَهُ عِنْدَهُ حَسَنَةً كَامِلَةً فَإِنْ هَمَّ بِهَا فَعَمِلَهَا كَتَبَهَا اللَّهُ سَيِّئَةً وَاحِدَةً

رَوَاهُ الْبُخَارِيُّ وَمُسْلِمٌ فِي صَحِيْحَيْهِمَا بِهَذِهِ الحُرُوْفِ

فانْظُر يَا أَخِي وفَّقَنَا اللهُ وَإِيَّاكَ إِلَى عَظِيْم لُطْفِ اللهِ تَعالى وتَأَمَّلْ هذِهِ الأَلْفَاظَ وَقَوْلُهُ "عِنْدَهُ" إِشَارَةٌ إلى الاعتناء بِهَا، وَقَوْلُهُ "كَامِلَة" لِلتَّأْكِيْدِ وَشِدَّةِ الاعتناء بِهَا وَقَالَ فِي السَّيِّئَةِ التي همَّ بِهَا ثُمَّ تركَهَا "كَتَبَهَا اللهُ عَنْدَهُ حَسَنَةً كَامِلَةً" فَأَكَّدَهَا بِكَامِلَةً، "وَإِنْ عَمِلَهَا كَتَبَهَا سَيِّئَةً وَاحِدَةً" فَأَكَّدَ تَقْلِيْلَهَا بِوَاحِدَةً وَلَمْ يؤكِّدْهَا بِكَامِلَةً فَلِلهِ الحَمْدُ وَالمِنَّةُ سُبْحَانَهُ لا نُحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْهِ وَبِاللهِ التَّوْفِيْقُ

On the authority of ibn Abbaas (may Allah be pleased with both of them): On the authority of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him) from among the sayings that he related from His Lord (glorified and

exalted be He) is that He said, "Verily, Allah recorded the good deeds and the evil deeds. Then He clarified how [that recording should occur:] whoever decided to do a good deed but he did not do it, Allah records it with Him as a complete good deed. And if he decided to do it and actually did it, Allah records it with Him as ten good deeds up to seven hundred times up to many times over. If he decided to do an evil deed but he did not do it, Allah records it with Him as one complete good deed. If he decided to do it and he actually did it, Allah records it as one evil deed."

Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim in their two *Sahih*s with that wording.

Dear brother, may Allah guide us and you, look at Allah's great kindness. Ponder over the wording [of this hadith]. His statement, "With Him," indicates Allah's great care for it. His statement, "complete" is for emphasis and extreme care for it. About the evil that one considers and then leaves, [He says,] "Allah records it with Him as one complete good deed," and He emphasizes it with, "complete". "If he does it, he records it as one evil deed." He has emphasized its insignificance by saying, "one" and he did not stress it by saying, "complete." And to Allah is all praise and graces. He is far above every imperfection. We cannot praise Him enough for His bounties. And all grace is from Allah.

Selected Vocabulary

تبارك	- *Tabaarak* This is a common expression used for Allah; it implies, "hallowed and pure is He, blessed is He, highly exalted, greatly magnified be He," and so forth. The word *baraka* (بركة) implies a great deal of good.[1] This and the following expression may only be used for Allah and may not be used for anyone else.[2]
تعالى	- This is also a common word used for Allah; it implies, "lofty, exalted, extolled and elevated be He; exalted is He above any shortcoming or fault".
الحسنات	- "the good deeds"
السّيّئات	- "the evil deeds"
بيّن	- "he explained, he made clear"
همّ	- "considered," see the discussion below
فلم	- "and not, then not," the ف is for "then" while the لم is a negation for something in the past

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[1] Cf., Abdullah al-Ghunaimaan, *Sharh Kitaab al-Tauheed min Sahih al-Bukhari* (Damanhoor: Maktaba al-Leenah, 1988), vol. 2, p. 331.

[2] Cf., al-Mudaabaghi, p. 262.

يعملها	- “he does it”
كتبها	- “recorded it”
عنده	- “with him”
كاملة	- “complete”
عشر	- “ten”
سبعمائة	- “seven hundred”
ضعف	- “times”
واحدة	- “one”

Takhreej

This hadith was recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim, Ahmad, al-Tabaraani, al-Daarimi and others on the authority of ibn Abbaas.

This hadith has also been narrated from a number of other Companions, including Abu Huraira, Abu Saeed al-Khudri, Abu Dharr, Maalik ibn Sasaah and Anas ibn Maalik. In particular, the hadith from Abu Huraira is also recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim and Ahmad. Al-Bukhari and Muslim also recorded the similar hadith of Maalik ibn Sasaah.[1]

In the ending of a narration in *Sahih Muslim*, there are the additional words,

وَمَحَاهَا اللَّهُ وَلاَ يَهْلِكُ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلاَّ هَالِكٌ

“Allah obliterates [that evil]. And Allah does not put anyone to destruction except the one who is to be destroyed.”

General Comments About the Hadith

This hadith demonstrates both the great justice as well as the great grace of Allah. No one is wronged by Allah in any way. If a person does an evil, it is considered one evil. If a person does a good deed, it is rewarded handsomely by Allah. A believer should think about hadith of this nature. This information makes the person realize that Allah is truly the Compassionate, the Merciful. The response from the believer should be full devotion and love for his Merciful Creator.

About the Narrator: ibn Abbaas

Ibn Abbaas was discussed in the commentary to Hadith Number 19.

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[1] Cf., ibn Muhammad, pp. 206-209.

On the authority of ibn Abbaas: On the authority of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's blessing and peace be upon him)

Ibn Hajr notes that he knows of no narration in which it is explicitly stated that ibn Abbaas heard this hadith directly from the Prophet (peace be upon him).[1] When the Prophet (peace be upon him) died, ibn Abbaas was still quite young. Therefore, many of the hadith that he narrated, he had actually heard from the older Companions and not directly from the Prophet (peace be upon him). At that time, though, it was not considered necessary to mention the link between the Companion who narrated the hadith, having heard it from another Companion, and the Prophet (peace be upon him). This method of passing on hadith, where the Companion did not mention his source and he did not hear the words directly from the Prophet (peace be upon him), is known as the *mursal* of the Companions.

This is a type of *mursal* hadith that is universally accepted by the hadith scholars.[2] When a Companion like ibn Abbaas used the term, "On the authority of the Prophet (peace be upon him)," he most likely heard this quote from either the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself or from another Companion. Note that in either case the validity of the hadith will not be affected given the fact that all Companions are considered trustworthy and people of integrity. Therefore, this type of hadith is accepted and is considered valid for proof.

In general, the Companions only narrated from other Companions or the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) himself. It is true that some Companions did narrate hadith from Followers on the authority of other Companions. But they usually only narrated sayings of other Companions or Followers or stories of the Tribes of Israel from the Followers. Furthermore, when they related the hadith from the Followers, they many times probably would mention that fact. Plus, the Companions were very careful about accepting reports from narrators who may not be completely trustworthy.

Ibn Abbaas himself was quoted as saying that they would take hadith only from people they knew. Furthermore, Ibn Hajr stated that he collected the reports of the Companions from the Followers from another Companion and he found none of the Followers that they quoted from to be weak.[3] Al-Iraqi stated that there are only twenty known hadith of Companions from Followers from other Companions.[4]

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[1] Ibn Hajr, *Fath*, vol. 13, p. 121.

[2] Abu Ishaq al-Isfraaeeni is one scholar who argued that this type of hadith should be considered the same as any other *mursal* hadith but this is generally regarded as a weak opinion.

[3] Ibn Hajr, *al-Nukat*, vol. 2, p. 570. Ibn Hajr has compiled a book containing the known hadith wherein a Companion narrated from a Follower. The work is published as Ahmad ibn Hajr, *Nuzhat al-Saamieen fi Riwaayah al-Sahaabah an al-Tabieen* (al-Thuqbah, Saudi Arabia: Daar al-Hijrah, 1995).

[4] Quoted in Khaldoon al-Ahdab, *Asbaab Ikhtilaaf al-Muhaditheen* (Jeddah: al-Daar al-Saudiyah, 1985), vol. 1, p. 223.

From among the sayings that he related from His Lord (glorified and exalted be He)

This is a *qudsi* hadith. The second in this collection. A discussion of the concept of *qudsi* hadith may be found in the commentary to Hadith Number 24.

Some of the other narrations of this hadith are much more explicit in their quoting hadith of this nature as a narration from Allah. For example, one of the narrations from Abu Huraira states:

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ إِذَا هَمَّ عَبْدِي بِسَيِّئَةٍ فَلَا
تَكْتُبُوهَا عَلَيْهِ فَإِنْ عَمِلَهَا فَاكْتُبُوهَا سَيِّئَةً وَإِذَا هَمَّ بِحَسَنَةٍ فَلَمْ يَعْمَلْهَا فَاكْتُبُوهَا حَسَنَةً
فَإِنْ عَمِلَهَا فَاكْتُبُوهَا عَشْرًا

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, “Allah has said, ‘If My slave considers doing a sin, do not record it against him. If he acts upon it, record it as a sin. If he considers doing a good deed and does not do it, record it as a good deed. And if he actually does it, record it as ten [good deeds].’” (Recorded by Muslim.)

If the words found in the hadith quoted by al-Nawawi, “Verily, Allah has recorded the good deeds and the evil deeds,” are considered part of this *qudsi* hadith, then they are understood to mean, “Allah said, ‘Verily, Allah has...’” However, those words could be considered a statement of the Prophet (peace be upon him), describing what Allah has done followed by quoting what Allah has said.[1]

“Verily, Allah recorded the good deeds and the evil deeds.”

Allah recorded and decreed which deeds are deserving of reward and which deeds are deserving of punishment.

In some narrations of this hadith, it states that Allah is the one who recorded the good deeds and the evil deeds.[2] In other narrations, it states that the angels record the deeds at the order of Allah. This second understanding is a very common understanding for this hadith. It helps one understand the following passage: “Allah ordered that the good and bad deeds be recorded and then Allah explained to the angels how the good and bad deeds were to be recorded."

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[1] Cf., ibn Hajr, *Fath*, vol. 13, p. 121.

[2] There is nothing in Islamic beliefs that should lead one to state that it is impossible for Allah to be the one who records the deeds. Allah can record them and He records them in a way that is befitting His divinity. Unfortunately, some writers, such as Taataay (pp. 362-364) object to such a concept and insist that there must be another interpretation to this hadith. On the other hand, Ibn Hajr (*Fath*, vol. 13, p. 121), for example, finds no difficulty in accepting the fact that Allah has recorded the deeds.

According to ibn Uthaimeen, this recording by Allah implies two matters: One is the recording of the good and bad deeds by Allah in the Preserved Tablet. This is referred to in the verse,

وَكُلُّ صَغِيرٍ وَكَبِيرٍ مُّسْتَطَرٌ

"And everything small and big is written down" (*al-Qamar* 53). Allah recorded the good and bad deeds in the Preserved Tablet. This recording took place before any of the deeds were actually performed, according to Allah's knowledge of what will occur. No one has knowledge of what is recorded therein.

The second recording is when the person actually performs the deeds. At that time, they are recorded according to Allah's justice, mercy and beneficence.[1]

In any case, the fact that all good and bad deeds are recorded should not be taken lightly. A person's deeds are recorded, the good and the bad. Nothing escapes Allah's knowledge, not even contemplating doing a bad or good deed.

"Then He clarified how [that recording should occur:] whoever decided to do a good deed but he did not do it, Allah records it with Him as a complete good deed"

Allah did not state what are the good deeds and the evil deeds that are recorded and how they are recorded.[2] The explanation for that recording is in the words following it: deeds have been divided into four categories (doing good deeds, deciding to do good deeds and then not doing them, evil deeds, deciding to do evil deeds and then not doing them). These categories shall be discussed separately below.

Baitaar explains this passage by saying, "Allah has legislated for mankind that such are good deeds and such are evil deeds and then he made that clear to them upon the tongue of His messenger. Therefore, after this explanation and clarification, this matter is not hidden to anyone."[3]

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[1] Ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 1, p. 65.

[2] According to al-Qaari (vol. 5, p. 159), the words, "then He clarified that" might be from the narrator and not form part of the text of the hadith. Al-Qaari, though, does not offer any evidence for that speculation. Ibn Uthaimeen (*Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 1, p. 65) states that the pronoun he refers to the Prophet (peace be upon him): "Then the Prophet (peace be upon him) explained that..." Al-Mudaabaghi (p. 263) also mentions that as one of the possible interpretations. Most commentators did not state who the "He" refers to. However, al-Aini (vol. 23, p. 79) and al-Munaawi (vol. 2, p. 247) explicitly state that it is in reference to Allah.

[3] Al-Baitaar, p. 236.

The Definition of Some Important Terms

In order to completely understand this hadith, one must understand what is the meaning of *hamm* هم ("considered, decided") and what is the difference between it and other similar terms.

Another important relevant word is *al-haajis* (الهاجس). This is a fleeting thought that occurs in one's mind. It does not stay but a second. The person does not give the thought any consideration and it leaves the person's mind quickly.[1] This kind of thought can occur to anybody and its content can be quite evil. Satan may try to put many thoughts into a person's mind. However, the person is not sinful in any way with respect to this type of thought, if he repels it and leaves it as no more than a fleeting thought.

The second concept is that of *al-khaatir* (الخاطر). This is also a thought that comes to one's mind. However, in this case, the person gives the thought some consideration before it leaves his mind.[2] This thought can also be quite evil, either coming from Satan or one's soul. Once again, if the person does not act upon it nor give it any further consideration once it leaves him, he is not sinful or held responsible for that thought.

The third notion is "the speech of the person to himself" (حديث النفس). This goes beyond the above levels in that the person actually contemplates whether or not he should perform the act that he is thinking about.[3] In the above cases, there was no such consideration. If the act that he thought about was an evil act and he did not follow it through, he will not be held responsible for this thought that occurred to him.

Again, by the mercy and grace of Allah, the person is not held responsible for any of the above types of thoughts that occur to his mind. When Allah revealed the verse,

لِّلَّهِ مَا فِى ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَمَا فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ ۗ وَإِن تُبْدُوا۟ مَا فِىٓ أَنفُسِكُمْ أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ يُحَاسِبْكُم بِهِ ٱللَّهُ ۖ فَيَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَآءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَآءُ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

"To Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth, and whether you disclose what is in your ownselves or conceal it, Allah will call you to account for it. Then He forgives whom He wills and punishes whom He wills. And Allah is able to do all things" (*al-Baqara* 284), the Companions found this very difficult. No human can control the thoughts that comes to his mind. This verse implies that a person will be held responsible even for those thoughts whose appearance he did not intend and cannot repel. The Companions stated that they are able to pray, fast and make jihad but this was beyond their means. Then Allah revealed the verses correcting the above misunderstanding. Allah said,

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[1] Taataay, p. 370.
[2] Taataay, p. 370.
[3] Taataay, p. 370; al-Sadlaan, *al-Niyyah*, vol. 1, p. 124.

لَا يُكَلِّفُ ٱللَّهُ نَفۡسًا إِلَّا وُسۡعَهَاۚ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتۡ وَعَلَيۡهَا مَا ٱكۡتَسَبَتۡۗ رَبَّنَا
لَا تُؤَاخِذۡنَآ إِن نَّسِينَآ أَوۡ أَخۡطَأۡنَاۚ رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحۡمِلۡ عَلَيۡنَآ إِصۡرٗا كَمَا حَمَلۡتَهُۥ
عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبۡلِنَاۚ رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلۡنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِۦۖ وَٱعۡفُ عَنَّا
وَٱغۡفِرۡ لَنَا وَٱرۡحَمۡنَآۚ أَنتَ مَوۡلَىٰنَا فَٱنصُرۡنَا عَلَى ٱلۡقَوۡمِ ٱلۡكَٰفِرِينَ

"Allah burdens not a person beyond his scope. He gets rewarded for that which he has earned, and he is punished for that [evil] which he has earned. 'Our Lord, punish us not if we forget or fall into error. Our Lord, lay not on us a burden like that which You did lay on those before us. Our Lord, put not on us a burden greater than we have strength to bear. Pardon us and grant us forgiveness. Have mercy on us. You are our protector. Give us victory over the disbelievers'" (*al-Baqara* 286). The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentioned that Allah has answered positively to all of those supplications mentioned in that verse. (Recorded by Muslim.)

Another hadith, recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim, states,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَجَاوَزَ عَنْ أُمَّتِي مَا حَدَّثَتْ بِهِ أَنْفُسَهَا مَا لَمْ تَعْمَلْ أَوْ تَتَكَلَّمْ

"Verily, Allah has overlooked for [the members of] my nation what their souls think about as long as they do not act on it or speak about it."

Although one is not held responsible for the above types of thoughts, if evil thoughts do come to one's mind, the person should seek refuge in Allah from the accursed Satan. Those evil thoughts should then be repelled. However, there are times in which the person's faith might be weak and he allows those thoughts to grow. Hence, he should immediately seek refuge in Allah from those evil thoughts in order not to allow them to blossom into anything more harmful. Allah has said,

وَإِمَّا يَنزَغَنَّكَ مِنَ ٱلشَّيۡطَٰنِ نَزۡغٞ فَٱسۡتَعِذۡ بِٱللَّهِۚ إِنَّهُۥ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

"And if an evil whisper comes to you from Satan, seek refuge in Allah. Verily, He is the All-Hearer, All-Knower" (*al-Araaf* 200). The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) also said,

يَأْتِي الشَّيْطَانُ أَحَدَكُمْ فَيَقُولُ مَنْ خَلَقَ كَذَا مَنْ خَلَقَ كَذَا حَتَّى يَقُولَ مَنْ خَلَقَ رَبَّكَ
فَإِذَا بَلَغَهُ فَلْيَسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ وَلْيَنْتَهِ

"Satan comes to one of you and he says, 'Who created this and who created that?' until he says, 'Who created your Lord?' If he reaches that stage with a person, he [that person] should seek refuge in Allah and stop such thoughts." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

The next level is a "decision" or *al-hamm* (الهم), which is what is mentioned in this hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him).[1] This term is defined in the supplement to Lane's *Lexicon* in the following manner,

> He purposed, or intended, a thing... He meditated, proposed to himself, purposed or intended to do the thing, he desired to do the thing... he endeavoured to do the thing... He intended it, meant it, desired it, or determined upon it, in his mind...[2]

This is where the person thinks about doing a deed and makes the decision to do the deed rather than not do it. Hence, it is the actual first step in doing a deed. He might even take some step toward that act that he wants to perform. The intention and the want to do the act is present in the person's mind. In this case, though, the decision is not so strong that the person necessarily fulfills what he has decided he is going to do.[3]

After *al-hamm* comes determination or *al-azm* (العزم). This is where the heart is completely determined to do a specific act.[4] When a person reaches this level, it is only his incapability to do the act that could possibly keep him from doing it. Otherwise, if there are no barriers keeping him from doing this act, he does it.

What is the Meaning of " *Hamm*(Decide)" in this Hadith?

According to al-Baaqilaani[5], if a person is seriously considering the performance of a sin and he allows that thought to grow in his heart, he is considered sinful simply for that thought and consideration. In other words, even if he did not perform the act, he is still sinful. Al-Baaqilaani understands the word *hamm* in this hadith only to mean that it is simply a thought that occurs in a person's mind although the person does not nurture it or truly consider it. He says that this is also called *hamm* and it is different from *azm*, where one has truly intended to do a certain deed. According to this interpretation, then, this hadith is more in reference to what was defined above as the first three types of thought for which all scholars agree that one is not held accountable or considered sinful.

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[1] According to ibn al-Jauzi, *al-hamm* differs from the previous categories in that it is considered one of the actions of the heart. That is why the person is held responsible for this deed. Quoted in ibn Hajr, *Fath*, vol. 13, p. 125.

[2] Lane, vol. 2, p. 3044.

[3] Al-Sadlaan, *al-Niyyah*, vol. 1, pp. 117-118.

[4] Al-Sadlaan, *al-Niyyah*, vol. 1, pp. 108-110.

[5] Quoted in al-Yahsoobi, vol. 1, pp. 518-519.

Al-Baaqilaani's opinion can be supported by other texts. For example, the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated,

إِذَا الْتَقَى الْمُسْلِمَانِ بِسَيْفَيْهِمَا فَالْقَاتِلُ وَالْمَقْتُولُ فِي النَّارِ فَقُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ هَذَا
الْقَاتِلُ فَمَا بَالُ الْمَقْتُولِ قَالَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ حَرِيصًا عَلَى قَتْلِ صَاحِبِهِ

"If two Muslims meet with their swords, then both the killer and the killed are in the Hell-fire." I [the narrator Abu Bakrah] said, "That is [obviously] for the killer but what crime did the killed commit?" He stated, "He was eager to kill his companion [the other person]." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

Qaadhi Iyaadh al-Yahsubi states that the majority of the early scholars and the scholars of fiqh and hadith are in agreement with al-Baaqilaani's interpretation. Abdullah ibn al-Mubaarak asked Sufyaan, "Is one going to be held responsible for his *hammah*?" He replied, "If it is determination, he will be held responsible for it."[1]

Qaadhi Iyaadh further argues that there are many hadith that prove that one is held accountable for the actions of the heart. He states that continually thinking and determining to do a sin is a sin itself. If the person actually then does commit that sin, it will be recorded as one complete sin.[2] If the person leaves it out of fear of Allah, it will be recorded as one good deed. The fighting against one's soul and its evil inclinations is a type of jihad and is, in itself, a good deed. Then he states that the *hamm* that is not recorded against a person— in other words, the *hamm* that is mentioned in this hadith— is nothing more than what is defined above as *khaatir* and which passes quickly without any intention behind it.[3]

Qaadhi Iyaadh stated that many of the jurists and scholars of hadith differ from al-Baaqilaani and follow the apparent meaning of this hadith.[4] Indeed, it seems that al-Baaqilaani's, al-Yahsoobi's and al-Nawawi's interpretations are untenable for a number of reasons:

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[1] Quoted in al-Yahsoobi, vol. 1, pp. 521-522.

[2] In al-Yahsoobi, it states that a complete sin will be recorded for the person. In al-Nawawi, *Sharh Saheeh* (Dar al-Marifah), this quote is recorded with the wording, "a second sin [will be recorded]." It seems that a second sin is not the correct wording. If that were the case, everyone who commits a sin would be held accountable for two sins: the intention behind it and the act of the sin itself. The intention and the act are usually treated together as one act.

[3] Al-Yahsoobi, vol. 1, pp. 522-523. Virtually, the exact same words may be found in al-Nawawi, *Sharh Saheeh*, vol. 2, pp. 150-151.

[4] Al-Yahsoobi, vol. 1, p. 519.

First, this interpretation is distorting the wording of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and choosing a lesser known usage for the word *hamm.*

Second, the hadith is "symmetric" in that it states that if a person has *hamm* concerning a good deed, he will be rewarded for that. Certainly, al-Baaqilaani and the others did not mean to imply that if a thought of a good deed simply appears to a person's mind and he does not even intend that deed, he will get the full reward of that deed for that fleeting thought. However, that is a necessary conclusion of their argument. If the necessary conclusion of an argument is false, then, in general, the argument itself must be considered false.

Third, the hadith about the killer and the killed being in the Hell-fire is irrelevant to the discussion at hand here. In that example, the person was trying to fulfill his intention but he was not able to do so. It was not the case that he decided not to do a bad deed. If he wills to do an evil deed but is simply not able to do it, he will be held responsible for it. If he decides to do an evil and then changes his mind and decides not to do it for the sake of Allah, he will be rewarded for that.

Fourth, there must be a difference between deciding to do an evil deed, due to some fleeting desire, and having a love and desire to that deed in the heart. The latter aspect one may be held responsible for but not the former. If a person, in his heart, continually has love for doing some evil deed and he likes that feeling in his heart, then he will be held responsible for that even if he never performed that evil deed. He will be held responsible for his continuance of that evil desire and love of something evil. This is consistent with how ibn al-Mubaarak is said to have explained Allah's saying,

وَٱلَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا۟ فَٰحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوٓا۟ أَنفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ فَٱسْتَغْفَرُوا۟
لِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَمَن يَغْفِرُ ٱلذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا ٱللَّهُ وَلَمْ يُصِرُّوا۟ عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلُوا۟ وَهُمْ
يَعْلَمُونَ

"And those who, when they have committed illegal sexual intercourse or wronged themselves with evil, remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their sins— and none can forgive sins but Allah. And they do not persist in what [wrong] they have done while they know" (*ali-Imraan* 135).

Allah also says,

إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ يُحِبُّونَ أَن تَشِيعَ ٱلْفَٰحِشَةُ فِى ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ
أَلِيمٌ فِى ٱلدُّنْيَا وَٱلْءَاخِرَةِ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

"Verily, those who love that lewdness should be spread among those who believe, they will have a painful torment in this world and in the Hereafter.

And Allah knows and you know not" (*al-Noor* 19). Allah also warns about having evil thoughts and evil intentions in the heart when He says,

وَٱعۡلَمُوٓاْ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَعۡلَمُ مَا فِيٓ أَنفُسِكُمۡ فَٱحۡذَرُوهُۚ

"And know that Allah knows what is in your souls, so be aware of Him" (*al-Baqara* 235).

Fifth, their interpretation runs counter to what is stated in another version of this hadith which is also found in *Sahih al-Bukhari*:

يَقُولُ اللَّهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ عَبْدِي أَنْ يَعْمَلَ سَيِّئَةً فَلا تَكْتُبُوهَا عَلَيْهِ حَتَّى يَعْمَلَهَا فَإِنْ عَمِلَهَا فَاكْتُبُوهَا بِمِثْلِهَا وَإِنْ تَرَكَهَا مِنْ أَجْلِي فَاكْتُبُوهَا لَهُ حَسَنَةً وَإِذَا أَرَادَ أَنْ يَعْمَلَ حَسَنَةً فَلَمْ يَعْمَلْهَا فَاكْتُبُوهَا لَهُ حَسَنَةً فَإِنْ عَمِلَهَا فَاكْتُبُوهَا لَهُ بِعَشْرِ أَمْثَالِهَا إِلَى سَبْعِ مِائَةِ ضِعْفٍ

"Allah says [to the angels,] 'If my servant wants (*araad*[1]) to do an evil deed, do not record it against him until he does it. If he does it, record it as it is. If he leaves it for My sake, record it as a good deed. If he wants to do a good deed and he does not do it, record it as one good deed. And if he does it, record for him ten like it up to seven hundred fold."

Ibn Rajab is one scholar whose conclusion agrees with this author's assessment. He says that the *hamm* is not simply a thought that occurs to one's mind and leaves. But it is the decision that is just short of a complete resolution to do the deed.[2] Similarly, al-Bugha and Mistu say that *hamm* is the decision to do an act and it is greater than simply a contemplation that occurs in the heart.[3] Sultaan also agrees with that assessment.[4]

The Reward for Deciding to do a Good Deed even if One Does not Do it

When a person decides to do a good deed, even though he ends up not doing it, Allah records for him one good deed. Allah states that He records it "with Him". This is a way of giving honor or prestige to that act. Furthermore, Allah stresses that it is a "complete" good deed, without any deficiency. That way, no one can imagine that there is a good deed recorded but it is not a complete good deed.[5]

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[1] Here the word is *araad* ("wants to do"), which definitely implies that the intention is there. In other words, it could not simply be a fleeting thought that has occurred to the person's mind but it is *hamm* as defined above.

[2] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 319.

[3] Al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 316.

[4] Sultaan, p. 326.

[5] Cf., ibn Hajr, *Fath*, vol. 13, p. 122. Also note the statements by al-Nawawi after he recorded the hadith.

Al-Toofi stated that having the intention or deciding to do a good deed is in itself a good deed. This is because it is the first step that leads to doing a good deed. Therefore, Allah records it as one good deed.[1]

At this point, though, someone could ask: If deciding to do a good deed is a good deed in itself, why is it not multiplied like other good deeds, as in the verse,

مَن جَآءَ بِٱلۡحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُۥ عَشۡرُ أَمۡثَالِهَاۖ

“Whoever brings a good deed shall have ten times the like thereof” (*al-Anaam* 160)? The response is that this verse is talking about the actual physical deeds while the thought in the heart is an exception to that general ruling. Hence, the decision in the heart gets recorded as a good deed but the multiplication is only when the decision is actually acted upon.[2]

However, this might still lead to another question: If this decision in the heart is enough to warrant the recording of one good deed, why is the simple decision to do an evil deed not enough to warrant the recording of one evil deed? The response is that when the person then decides not to perform that evil deed, he has done an additional act that expiates his evil decision and he has gone against his desires. This, in itself, is good on his part. Therefore, a good deed is recorded for him in that case too.

According to al-Qaari, the reward for deciding on a good deed is only in the case where the person wants to do the deed but is not able to do it.[3] However, the apparent meaning of this hadith is that the person ends up not doing the good deed regardless of whether that was due to some preventing factor or not. Indeed, if it had been as al-Qaari concluded, one would expect the Prophet (peace be upon him) to have said, “If one decides to do a good deed but he is not able to perform it…”

According to ibn Hajr, the level of reward will be different depending on the reasons that the person did not perform the act. If the person is prevented from performing the deed due to external reasons beyond his control and, in addition, he is saddened by the fact that he could not perform the act, then his reward would be the greatest. However, if he decided not to do the act of his own volition, then his reward would be less than in the previous case. If the person does something opposite of what he was originally going to do, such as instead of giving a dollar in charity he spends it on something forbidden, then, according to ibn Hajr, he would not have a good deed recorded for him at all.[4]

In another hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

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[1] Quoted in ibn Hajr, *Fath*, vol. 13 p. 123.

[2] Ibn Hajr, *Fath*, vol. 13, p. 123.

[3] Al-Qaari, vol. 5, p. 159.

[4] Ibn Hajr, *Fath*, vol. 13, p. 123.

إِنَّمَا الدُّنْيَا لأَرْبَعَةِ نَفَرٍ عَبْدٍ رَزَقَهُ اللَّهُ مَالاً وَعِلْمًا فَهُوَ يَتَّقِي فِيهِ رَبَّهُ وَيَصِلُ فِيهِ رَحِمَهُ وَيَعْلَمُ لِلَّهِ فِيهِ حَقًّا فَهَذَا بِأَفْضَلِ الْمَنَازِلِ وَعَبْدٍ رَزَقَهُ اللَّهُ عِلْمًا وَلَمْ يَرْزُقْهُ مَالاً فَهُوَ صَادِقُ النِّيَّةِ يَقُولُ لَوْ أَنَّ لِي مَالاً لَعَمِلْتُ بِعَمَلِ فُلاَنٍ فَهُوَ بِنِيَّتِهِ فَأَجْرُهُمَا سَوَاءٌ وَعَبْدٍ رَزَقَهُ اللَّهُ مَالاً وَلَمْ يَرْزُقْهُ عِلْمًا فَهُوَ يَخْبِطُ فِي مَالِهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ لاَ يَتَّقِي فِيهِ رَبَّهُ وَلاَ يَصِلُ فِيهِ رَحِمَهُ وَلاَ يَعْلَمُ لِلَّهِ فِيهِ حَقًّا فَهَذَا بِأَخْبَثِ الْمَنَازِلِ وَعَبْدٍ لَمْ يَرْزُقْهُ اللَّهُ مَالاً وَلاَ عِلْمًا فَهُوَ يَقُولُ لَوْ أَنَّ لِي مَالاً لَعَمِلْتُ فِيهِ بِعَمَلِ فُلاَنٍ فَهُوَ بِنِيَّتِهِ فَوِزْرُهُمَا سَوَاءٌ

"This world is made up of only four types of people: [First is] a servant [of Allah] whom Allah provided with wealth and knowledge. He fears his Lord concerning them and he keeps the ties of kin and he recognizes Allah's rights in them. He is the person of the best station. Second is a person to whom Allah gave knowledge but did not give wealth. He is sincere in his intention when he says, 'If I had wealth, I would have used it in the way that so and so [the first person] uses it.' Due to his intention, the reward of the two of them will be the same. [A third person] is a servant to whom Allah gave wealth but He did not bless him with knowledge. He spends his wealth without knowledge, not fearing his Lord with respect to it, not keeping the ties of kin and not recognizing Allah's right in it. He is in the worst station. And [the fourth] is a servant to whom Allah gave neither wealth nor knowledge. He says, 'If I had wealth I would use it in the way that so and so [the third person] uses it.' Those two are equal in their burden."[1]

This hadith gives the impression that the reward for the two (the one who did the act and the one who simply intended the act) would be the same. Therefore, it seems to contradict this present hadith from al-Nawawi's collection. According to ibn Rajab, the two of them are equal in the essential reward for the deed. However, the multiplication of the deed is only for the one who actually performs the deed. In other words, the one who would like to do the act has recorded for him one complete good deed. With respect to that recording, he is equal to the one who did the deed. But the one who actually did the deed gets that recording plus the additional multiplication of the deed. Hence, there is no contradiction between these two hadith.[2]

Therefore, the one who actually does the deed gets a special reward (the multiplication of the deed). Another example of this nature is found in the Quran:

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[1] Recorded by al-Tirmidhi, ibn Maajah and Ahmad. According to al-Hilaali, it is *sahih*. See al-Hilaali, *Eeqaadh*, p. 510.

[2] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 321.

لَّا يَسْتَوِى ٱلْقَٰعِدُونَ مِنَ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ غَيْرُ أُو۟لِى ٱلضَّرَرِ وَٱلْمُجَٰهِدُونَ فِى
سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ بِأَمْوَٰلِهِمْ وَأَنفُسِهِمْ ۚ فَضَّلَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْمُجَٰهِدِينَ بِأَمْوَٰلِهِمْ وَأَنفُسِهِمْ
عَلَى ٱلْقَٰعِدِينَ دَرَجَةً ۚ وَكُلًّا وَعَدَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْحُسْنَىٰ ۚ وَفَضَّلَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْمُجَٰهِدِينَ
عَلَى ٱلْقَٰعِدِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٩٥﴾ دَرَجَٰتٍ مِّنْهُ وَمَغْفِرَةً وَرَحْمَةً ۚ وَكَانَ ٱللَّهُ
غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا

"Not equal are those who sit [at home], except for those who are disabled, and those who strive hard in the way of Allah with their wealth and their lives. Allah has preferred in grades those who strive with their wealth and lives over those who sit. Unto each, Allah has promised good, but Allah has preferred those who strive over those who sit by a great reward. Degrees of [higher] ranks from Him and forgiveness and mercy. And Allah is ever Oft-Forgiving and Most Merciful" (*al-Nisaa* 95-96). It is narrated from ibn Abbaas and others that those who strive are preferred to those who were not able to strive by one rank. And those who strove are preferred to those who did not strive, although they had no physical or material excuse, by many ranks.[1]

Hence, there is a difference between those who would have striven if they had the ability to do so and those who actually did strive for the sake of Allah. Perhaps this is due to the real suffering and hardship that those who actually performed the act had to encounter. They are thereby deserving of grace or bounty in addition to those who would have performed the same deed if they had the ability to do so. Other than that one grace, they are equal in reward. That is the bounty of Allah that He bestows upon whom He wills.[2]

> "And if he decided to do it and actually did it, Allah records it with Him as ten good deeds up to seven hundred times up to many times over."

Such is the mercy of Allah that when a person actually does perform a good deed, Allah does not record it for him as simply one good deed. Instead, Allah multiplies it a minimum of ten times. This is also confirmed by the Quranic verse,

مَن جَآءَ بِٱلْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُۥ عَشْرُ أَمْثَالِهَا ۖ

"Whoever brings a good deed shall have ten times the like thereof" (*al-Anaam* 160).

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[1] Quoted in ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 321.

[2] Cf., al-Tabari, vol. 4, p. 231.

But the deed could also be multiplied seven hundred times. One deed that is specifically multiplied seven hundred fold is the act of giving wealth for the sake of Allah. Allah says in the Quran,

مَّثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمْوَٰلَهُمْ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنۢبَتَتْ سَبْعَ سَنَابِلَ
فِى كُلِّ سُنۢبُلَةٍ مِّا۟ئَةُ حَبَّةٍۗ وَٱللَّهُ يُضَٰعِفُ لِمَن يَشَآءُۗ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

"The likeness of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is as that of a grain [of corn]. It grows seven ears and each ear has a hundred grains. Allah gives manifold increase to whom He wills. And Allah is all-sufficient for His creatures' needs, All-Knowing" (*al-Baqara* 261). This verse implies a seven-hundred fold reward for spending in the way of Allah.[1] Furthermore, there is the following hadith:

عَنْ أَبِي مَسْعُودٍ الْأَنْصَارِيِّ قَالَ جَاءَ رَجُلٌ بِنَاقَةٍ مَخْطُومَةٍ فَقَالَ هَذِهِ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَقَالَ
رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَكَ بِهَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ سَبْعُ مِائَةِ نَاقَةٍ كُلُّهَا مَخْطُومَةٌ

On the authority of Abu Masood al-Ansaari who said: A man came with a camel and its reigns, saying, "This is for the sake of Allah." The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "For you, on the Day of Resurrection, will be seven hundred camels, all of them with their reigns." (Recorded by Muslim.)

The deed could also be multiplied so many times over that the total amount is known only to Allah. For example, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) has said,

كُلُّ عَمَلِ ابْنِ آدَمَ يُضَاعَفُ الْحَسَنَةُ عَشْرُ أَمْثَالِهَا إِلَى سَبْعمِائَة ضِعْفٍ قَالَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ
إِلاَّ الصَّوْمَ فَإِنَّهُ لِي وَأَنَا أَجْزِي بِهِ يَدَعُ شَهْوَتَهُ وَطَعَامَهُ مِنْ أَجْلِي

"Every good deed that a human performs is multiplied ten times up to seven hundred. And Allah has said, 'Except for the fast for it is done for My sake and I shall reward it [even more]. The person leaves his desires and food for My sake…'" (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

Patience and perseverance is another deed that is rewarded by an amount that is known only to Allah. Allah has stated in the Quran,

إِنَّمَا يُوَفَّى ٱلصَّٰبِرُونَ أَجْرَهُم بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ

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[1] Some people argue that the seven-hundred fold reward is only for the act of giving for the sake of Allah. No other deed shall be multiplied to such an extent. Ibn Hajr [*Fath* (Maktabah al-Tijaariyyah, vol. 13, p. 124] presents the argument for that view. It seems, though, that there is no strong reason to restrict that merciful reward from Allah just to that act. Allah knows best.

"Only those who are patient shall receive their reward in full without measure" (*al-Zumar* 10).[1]

The same deed may be performed by two different people and the manifold reward for each of them may be different. Ibn Rajab states that the amount of the multiple of the reward is based on a number of factors. It is determined by the excellence of one's Islam, the excellence of one's sincerity and purity in the action, the excellence of the deed itself and the need for the deed done.[2]

"If he decided to do an evil deed but he did not do it, Allah records it with Him as one complete good deed."

If a person changes his mind and decides not to do an evil deed, a complete good deed is recorded for him, without any shortcoming in the nature of that good deed. Restraining oneself from committing an evil deed is, in itself, a good deed. Hence, the person deserves to have that act on his part counted among his good deeds.

Based on other narrations, it is clear that this recording of a good deed is conditional upon the person leaving that good deed out of fear of Allah or for the sake of Allah. The narration from Abu Huraira in *Sahih Muslim* explicitly states this condition:

إِنَّمَا تَرَكَهَا مِنْ جَرَّايَ

"He left it only due to Me."[3] The act of changing one's mind and deciding not to do an evil deed due to fear of Allah is definitely a good deed and, as such, it will be recorded as a good deed.[4]

Indeed, if a person makes this a common characteristic of his behavior, he, Allah willing, will be from among the inhabitants of Paradise. Allah says,

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[1] It should be noted that this is just one understanding of the verse and it may be based on a report that is questionable. Another understanding of the verse is that those who were patient shall receive their reward without any reckoning in the Hereafter. See the commentary of al-Samaani vis-a-vis ibn Katheer: Abu al-Mudhafar al-Samaani, *Tafseer al-Quran* (Riyadh: Daar al-Watn, 1997), vol. 4, p. 462; ibn Katheer, *Tafseer*, vol. 4, p. 51.

[2] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 316.

[3] A hadith in *Sahih al-Bukhari* also gives the same meaning.

[4] Ibn Hajr [*Fath* (al-Maktab al-Tijaariyyah), vol. 13, p. 124] says that it is possible that when one does not do an evil act that he had decided upon, it is in itself a good deed and will be recorded as a good deed. But if the person refrains from that evil deed for the sake of Allah, then that act of refrain will be multiplied and will not simply be one good deed. Although this may be feasible and well within what one may expect of Allah's mercy, it is not what is explicitly stated in either this hadith or the other related hadith. Allah knows best.

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِۦ وَنَهَى ٱلنَّفْسَ عَنِ ٱلْهَوَىٰ ﴿٤٠﴾ فَإِنَّ ٱلْجَنَّةَ هِىَ ٱلْمَأْوَىٰ

"But as for him who feared standing before his Lord and restrained himself from impure evil desires and lusts, verily, Paradise will be his abode" (*al-Naaziaat* 40-41).

Sometimes a person may decide not to perform an evil deed simply out of fear of others or for the sake of show. In this case, some scholars say that he will be held responsible for that intention as he gave preference to the fear of men over the fear of Allah or because he is intending to show himself as a pious person.[1]

Furthermore, if a person decides to do an evil deed and does what he can to perform it but he is simply not to able to do it, he will also be held accountable for that evil intention. This is like the case mentioned earlier of the killer and the killed both being in the Hell-fire because each did what he could to kill the other. In fact, in the hadith just quoted, praising the one who refrains from an evil deed, the word *tarakaha* ("left it") is used. Al-Khattaabi pointed out that, in general, this word is only used for the person who has the ability to do something but he does not do it.[2]

Some have questioned that since it is the case that when a person decides to do a good deed and it is counted as a good deed, shouldn't his decision to do an evil deed be counted as an evil deed. The response is that this is part of the mercy and blessings from Allah. Allah records the evil deeds of people and holds them responsible for them as an act of justice on His part. And He forgives some deeds and disregards the decision to do evil as an act of mercy on His part.

Furthermore, there may be a great wisdom behind this mercy from Allah. When a person commits a sin, the sin is not going to be multiplied. Now, if he is already going to be held sinful just for deciding to commit a sin, then he might as well go ahead and commit that sin. There is no incentive for him not to commit the sin as, if he does it or not, he will already be receiving one sin for his decision. However, by Allah's mercy, if he changes his mind and decides not to commit that sin, not only will that not be held against him as one sin but, instead, it will be transformed into a good deed for him. On the other hand, when a person decides to do a good deed, he should not stop there simply because he has a good deed recorded for him. Instead, he should go forward and do that good deed as, when he actually does it, it will be multiplied for him. And all praises are to Allah.

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[1] Cf., ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 321.
[2] Quoted in ibn Hajr, *Fath*, vol. 13, p. 124.

"If he decided to do it and he actually did it, Allah records it as one evil deed."

Allah never wrongs any of His creatures in any way. If a person commits an evil deed, it is recorded as one deed and only one deed without any multiplication to it. This is also stated in the Quran where Allah says,

وَمَن جَآءَ بِٱلسَّيِّئَةِ فَلَا يُجْزَىٰٓ إِلَّا مِثْلَهَا وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ

"Whoever brings an evil deed shall have only the recompense of the like thereof, and they will not be wronged" (*al-Anaam* 160).

Note that when a person intends to do a good deed, that in itself is a good deed and the performance of that deed leads to it being multiplied a minimum of ten times. When a person intends on committing a sin, that is not recorded as a sin. But when he does the sin, it is recorded as one evil deed. He does not get one evil deed recorded for his intention and a second evil deed recorded for his actually performing the deed.[1]

Evil Deeds are Not Multiplied But Their Magnitudes May Differ

This hadith makes it clear that the evil deeds are not multiplied by Allah. There is a narration from Mujaahid, a Follower, that states, "Sins committed in Makkah are multiplied, in the same way that the good deeds are multiplied."[2] Mujaahid's statement is a very common notion. However, it may not be correct.

Commenting on that notion, ibn Baaz wrote,

> As for sins, according to those scholars who researched this matter in detail, they are not multiplied with respect to their quantity although they may be increased with respect to their quality. But their quantity is never multiplied. This is because Allah has said, "Whoever comes with a good deed shall have ten like similar to it and who ever comes with an evil deed shall be recompensed only what is similar to it." Therefore, sins are never multiplied, not during Ramadhan[3], not in the confines of the Noble Sanctuary nor at any other time [or place]. Certainly, one sin is always one sin and this is part of His mercy and grace.[4]

In that passage, ibn Baaz has noted two important points: First, Allah never multiplies a person's evil deed. One evil deed is always going to be one deed in the scale. Second, though, the evil deeds are not all of the same weight and gravity. Some deeds are much graver than others. For example, there are some sins that the Prophet (peace be upon him) called the destructive sins, these including associating partners with Allah, adultery, murder and so forth.

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[1] Cf., ibn Abdul-Salaam's statement in ibn Hajr, *Fath*, vol. 13, p. 123.

[2] Quoted in ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 318.

[3] Al-Haitami (*Fath*, p. 265) noted that there are some weak hadith that state that the sins are multiplied during Ramadhan.

[4] Quoted in Sultaan, p. 331.

At the same time, depending on numerous factors, one sin may be graver at one time than at another time. This could occur for a number of reasons, including:[1]

(1) The sanctity of the time may increase the gravity of a sin. For example, according to Qataadah, *dhulm* (wrongdoing) committed during the Inviolable Months is a greater sin than when committed at other times. *Dhulm* at all times, he said, is unacceptable but Allah has the right to declare it a worse sin for whatever time He wills. This is based on the Quranic verse,

إِنَّ عِدَّةَ ٱلشُّهُورِ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ ٱثْنَا عَشَرَ شَهْرًا فِى كِتَٰبِ ٱللَّهِ يَوْمَ خَلَقَ
ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضَ مِنْهَآ أَرْبَعَةٌ حُرُمٌ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ ٱلدِّينُ ٱلْقَيِّمُ ۚ فَلَا تَظْلِمُوا۟ فِيهِنَّ
أَنفُسَكُمْ ۚ

"Verily, the number of months with Allah is twelve months, so was it ordained by Allah on the day He created the heavens and the earth. Of them, four are sacred.[2] That is the right religion. So wrong (*dhulm*) not yourselves therein" (*al-Taubah* 36).[3]

(2) The sanctity of the place may also increase the heinousness of the sin. Allah says about the Inviolable Mosque in Makkah,

وَمَن يُرِدْ فِيهِ بِإِلْحَادٍ بِظُلْمٍ نُّذِقْهُ مِنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ

"And whoever inclines to evil therein or to do wrong, him We shall cause to taste a painful torment" (*al-Hajj* 25). For this reason, many of the pious forefathers, including ibn Abbaas, Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-Aas and Umar ibn Abdul Azeez, opted not to live in the confines of the Noble Sanctuary. Abdullah ibn Amr was quoted as saying that a sin committed therein is greater.[4]

(3) The nobility of a person or the fact that he is taken as an example can also make a sin graver. For example, Allah threatened the Prophet (peace be upon him) with a very great and extreme punishment in the verse below.

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[1] For more on this point, see any of the following: al-Ghazzaali, vol. 4, p. 32; Ahmad Fareed, *Tahdheer al-Daani wa al-Qaasi min Uqoobaat al-Dhunoob wa al-Maasi* (Alexandria: Daar al-Aqeedah li-l-Turaath, 1991), pp. 22-27; Ahmad ibn Qudaama al-Maqdisi, *Mukhtasar Minhaaj al-Qaasideen* (Daar al-Dawah, 1978), pp. 257-259.

[2] These are the first (Muharram), seventh (Rajab), eleventh (Dhu-l-Qaadah) and twelfth (Dhu-l-Hijjah) months of the Islamic calendar.

[3] Qataadah was quoted in ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 317.

[4] Cf., ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 318.

This is because the referred to action is completely inexcusable from someone in the Prophet's position. Allah has said,

وَلَوْلَآ أَن ثَبَّتْنَـٰكَ لَقَدْ كِدتَّ تَرْكَنُ إِلَيْهِمْ شَيْـًٔا قَلِيلًا ﴿٧٤﴾ إِذًا لَّأَذَقْنَـٰكَ ضِعْفَ ٱلْحَيَوٰةِ وَضِعْفَ ٱلْمَمَاتِ ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُ لَكَ عَلَيْنَا نَصِيرًا

"And had We not made you stand firm, you would nearly have inclined to them [the disbelievers] a little. In that case, We would have made you taste a double portion [of punishment] in this life and a double portion after death. And then you would have found none to help you against Us" (*al-Israa* 74-75).

Allah also says concerning the Prophet's wives,

يَـٰنِسَآءَ ٱلنَّبِىِّ مَن يَأْتِ مِنكُنَّ بِفَـٰحِشَةٍ مُّبَيِّنَةٍ يُضَـٰعَفْ لَهَا ٱلْعَذَابُ ضِعْفَيْنِ ۚ وَكَانَ ذَٰلِكَ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ يَسِيرًا

"O wives of the Prophet! Whoever of you commits an open illegal sexual intercourse, the torment for her will be doubled. And that is easy for Allah" (*al-Ahzaab* 30).

(4) Many of the early scholars noted that when a person belittles a sin, Allah considers it greater. Any sin is displeasing to Allah. Therefore, no believer should downplay his sins and consider them unimportant. Abdullah ibn Masood once said, "A believer sees his sins as if he is at the foot of a mountain and he fears that they will fall upon him. The evildoer views his sin like a fly that lands on his nose that he just swats at." (Recorded by al-Bukhari.)

(5) A person showing pleasure at a sin he has committed is also considered a cause for the enormity of the sin to be greater. If a person, for example, brags and boasts about how he cheated somebody else in a business dealing, he is compounding the seriousness of that sin by his actions.

(6) A sin is also made greater by exposing it and spreading the news of one's sins to others. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated,

كُلُّ أُمَّتِي مُعَافَى إِلاَّ الْمُجَاهِرِينَ وَإِنَّ مِنَ الْمُجَاهَرَةِ أَنْ يَعْمَلَ الرَّجُلُ بِاللَّيْلِ عَمَلاً ثُمَّ يُصْبِحَ وَقَدْ سَتَرَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ فَيَقُولَ يَا فُلاَنُ عَمِلْتُ الْبَارِحَةَ كَذَا وَكَذَا وَقَدْ بَاتَ يَسْتُرُهُ رَبُّهُ وَيُصْبِحُ يَكْشِفُ سِتْرَ اللَّهِ عَنْهُ

"All of my Nation are to be forgiven except those who publicize their sins. Publicizing the sins includes a person doing something during the night and then in the morning, although Allah had kept that act concealed for him, he says, 'O so and so, last night I did such and such.' He spent the night being concealed by his Lord and in the morning he uncovered what Allah had kept concealed for him." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

(7) The enormity of a sin is also greater when there is less drive causing the person to commit that sin. In such cases, there is very little excuse for the person. He was not in a state where he was so overcome by desire that he could not control himself. This is what the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated,

ثَلاثَةٌ لا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيامَةِ وَلاَ يُزَكِّيهِمْ وَلا يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذابٌ أَلِيمٌ شَيْخٌ
زَانٍ وَمَلِكٌ كَذَّابٌ وَعَائِلٌ مُسْتَكْبِرٌ

"There are three [categories of people] to whom Allah will not speak [any pleasing words], for whom Allah will not cleanse of their sins and at whom Allah will not look and they shall have a grievous punishment. [They are] an old man who commits illegal sexual intercourse, a lying king and an arrogant impoverished person." (Recorded by Muslim.)

"Allah obliterates [that evil]. And Allah does not put anyone to destruction
except for one who is to be destroyed."

Another *qudsi* hadith in *Sahih Muslim* states,

يَقُولُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ مَنْ جاءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُ عَشْرُ أَمْثَالِهَا وَأَزِيدُ وَمَنْ جاءَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ فَجَزَاؤُهُ
سَيِّئَةٌ مِثْلُهَا أَوْ أَغْفِرُ

"Allah says, 'If anyone does a good deed, he gets ten like it or I increase that number. If anyone does an evil deed, its recompense is [one] similar to it or I forgive it.'" In this hadith, one sees how mercifully Allah deals with evil deeds. They are either to be counted as one evil deed, without any addition or multiplication of it, or Allah will forgive or wipe away those deeds. Allah wipes away evil deeds through various means, such as repentance, following up the evil deed with a good deed and so forth.

If one considers how mercifully Allah deals with deeds, one will realize that the only ones who will be destroyed are those who destroy themselves and who truly deserve to be destroyed. Allah records every evil deed as just one. If a person decides to do an evil deed and then does not do it, it is recorded as one good deed. If a person does a good deed, it is multiplied for him. It is multiplied at least ten times to a multitude of times. If a person's evil deeds outweigh his good deeds, then he must be doing great acts of evil or evil to the amount of at least ten times the good he does. If someone is of that nature, he is truly deserving to be destroyed by being sent to the Hell-fire.[1]

The Companion Abdullah ibn Masud is quoted to have said, "Woe to the one whose single [acts of evil] outweigh his ten time multiple [of a single good deed]."[2]

Other Points Related to This Hadith

- Al-Tabari[3] noted that this hadith is evidence that the recording angels even record what a person is determined to do in his heart. He said that there are some who claim that the recording angels only record the outward or visible deeds but this hadith is an argument against them.[4]
- This is another hadith, like Hadith #1 in this collection, that demonstrates the importance of having a good intention. A person will have recorded for himself good deeds simply because of his intention. Hence, once again, his good intentions can take him beyond what his actual deeds might be.[5]
- Based on the previous point, a Muslim should try to always have the intention to do good. When he contemplates to himself, he should consider doing good things. When that contemplation turns into a decision to do the act, he will be rewarded for that decision even if he ends up not doing the act. Furthermore, the continually present intention to do good deeds should, Allah willing, turn into the actual doing of more good acts.[6]
- Allah does not mention how much He may multiply deeds nor does He specify which deeds are multiplied by only ten or seven hundred or more than that. Al-Qaari states that, as a method of exhortation, it is wiser or more effective to leave the reward unknown to the doer. It is sufficient for the doer to know that there is a great reward but he does not have to know exactly what it is. This approach can be found in other hadith and in the Quran. For example, Allah says,

  فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَّآ أُخْفِيَ لَهُم مِّن قُرَّةِ أَعْيُنٍ جَزَآءً بِمَا كَانُوا۟ يَعْمَلُونَ

  "No person knows what is kept hidden for them of joy as a reward for what they used to do" (*al-Sajdah* 17).[7]
- This hadith is further evidence that Allah's mercy and His willingness to reward overrides His anger for the performance of evil. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

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[1] Cf., al-Yahsoobi, vol. 1, p. 525.

[2] Quoted in ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 328.

[3] In al-Nawawi, *Sharh Saheeh*, vol. 2, p. 151, it states al-Tahaawi instead of al-Tabari.

[4] Quoted in al-Yahsoobi, vol. 1, pp. 525-6.

[5] Cf., al-Qaari, vol. 5, p. 160.

[6] Cf., al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 319.

[7] Al-Qaari, vol. 5, p. 160.

لَمَّا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ الْخَلْقَ كَتَبَ فِي كِتَابِهِ وَهُوَ يَكْتُبُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ وَهُوَ وَضْعٌ عِنْدَهُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ إِنَّ رَحْمَتِي تَغْلِبُ غَضَبِي

"When Allah created the creation, He recorded [this] in His book and He prescribed for Himself and He placed it with Himself upon the Throne: 'Verily, My mercy overrides My anger.'" (Recorded by al-Bukhari.) This fact is one of the greatest blessings for mankind. Every individual should think about how much mercy Allah has decreed for Himself— while no one is able to force Allah to make such a decree. This aspect alone should make anyone who has decided to commit an evil deed— which is displeasing to the Most Merciful— change his mind and not commit that deed as why should anyone want to do something displeasing to the Lord who is so merciful?

- Allah's multiplication of one's good deeds and His lack of multiplication of evil deeds is an obvious manifestation of Allah's mercy and grace. In fact, al-Aini wrote, "If it were not for that great bounty and grace no one would enter Paradise for the servants' evils deeds are greater than their good deeds. But Allah has been gentle to His servants and He multiplies for them their good deeds but not their evil deeds."[1]
- It seems, Allah knows best, that this hadith is in reference only to the physical acts that a person can perform, such as adultery, stealing and so forth. There is a consensus that there are some acts that are held against a person whether the person acted upon them or not. This would include acts such as pride, arrogance, envy, acting for show and so forth.[2] Similarly, if a person is having doubts about Allah or the truthfulness of the Prophet (peace be upon him),[3] even if he does not act upon those doubts, he will held accountable for them. In fact, such doubts and thoughts are tantamount to disbelief. Included in this category of sinful thoughts of the heart are loving what Allah dislikes or disliking what Allah has approved of.[4]
- Allah's grace which is brought forth in this hadith has also been alluded to in the following verse of the Quran,[5]

لَا يُكَلِّفُ ٱللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ۚ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا ٱكْتَسَبَتْ ۗ

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[1] Al-Aini, vol. 23, p. 80.

[2] Cf., al-Qaari, vol. 5, p. 160. Ibn Bataal originally made a similar statement. See ibn Hajr, *Fath*, vol. 13, p. 127.

[3] These are more than simply the thoughts that uncontrollably occur to a person's mind, as were discussed earlier. But these are the doubts that a person holds and adheres to in his mind.

[4] Cf., ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 324.

[5] This verse is part of a group of verses that were already quoted. They are very closely related to the topic at hand because they demonstrate that a person is not held responsible for the thoughts that come to his mind and which he cannot control.

"Allah burdens not a soul beyond what it can bear. He gets reward for that [good] which he has earned. And he is punished for that [evil] which he has earned" (*al-Baqara* 286). In this verse, Allah has used the word *kasaba* for what the person earns and *iktisaba* for what will be held against the person. In most English translations, like the above from Khan and al-Hilaali, there is no distinction made between these two terms. However, there is a difference between the two words. The first word implies what one earns even with very little effort. This would include what a person decides to do and then he does not do it. He still has earned one good deed. The second word, which is what one is going to be held responsible for, implies more effort. In other words, as in this hadith, if a person simply decides to do an evil deed but he does not go out and do it, that will not be held against him at all.

Summary of the Hadith

- Allah has decreed what the good deeds and evil deeds are. He has recorded the deeds of mankind or has ordered the angels to record the deeds of mankind in the manner described in this hadith.
- First, if a person truly decides to do a good deed and then ends up not doing it, Allah will have recorded for him one good deed.
- Second, if the person actually performs the good deed, it will be multiplied for him by a multiple of ten up to a multiple of whatever Allah, in His mercy and grace, wills.
- Third, if a person decides to do an evil deed and then, for the sake of Allah, he changes his way and does not do that deed, Allah will record for him one good deed.
- Fourth, if a person actually does perform the evil deed, Allah will only record one evil deed against him.
- Such is the mercy and grace of Allah. With this type of reckoning, only those who truly deserve to be destroyed and punished will be destroyed and punished.

Hadith #38
“Whoever Shows Enmity to...”

عَنْ أَبي هُرَيْرَة رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله
عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَالَ مَنْ عَادَى لِي وَلِيًّا فَقَدْ آذَنْتُهُ
بِالْحَرْبِ وَمَا تَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ عَبْدِي بِشَيْءٍ أَحَبَّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا
افْتَرَضْتُهُ عَلَيْهِ وَلاَ يَزَالُ عَبْدِي يَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيَّ بِالنَّوَافِلِ حَتَّى
أُحِبَّهُ فَإِذَا أَحْبَبْتُهُ كُنْتُ سَمْعَهُ الَّذِي يَسْمَعُ بِهِ وَبَصَرَهُ الَّذِي
يُبْصِرُ بِهِ وَيَدَهُ الَّتِي يَبْطِشُ بِهَا وَرِجْلَهُ الَّتِي يَمْشِي بِهَا وَلَئِنْ
سَأَلَنِي لَأُعْطِيَنَّهُ وَلَئِنِ اسْتَعَاذَنِي لَأُعِيذَنَّهُ
رَوَاهُ الْبُخَارِيُّ

On the authority of Abu Huraira who said: The Messenger of Allah (upon whom be Allah’s blessings and peace) said, “Allah the Almighty has said, ‘Whoever has mutual animosity with a friend (*wali*) of Mine, I declare war upon him. My servant does not draw near to Me with anything more beloved to Me than the religious duties that I have imposed upon him; and My servant continues to draw near to Me with supererogatory works such that I love him. And when I love him, I am his hearing with which he hears, his seeing with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes, and his leg with which he walks. Were he to ask of Me, I would surely give him; and were he to ask Me for refuge, I would surely grant him it.’”
Recorded by al-Bukhari.

Selected Vocabulary

عادى	- "enmity, opposition between two"
آذنته	- “I have announced, declared to him”
حرب	- "war"
تقرّب	- “draw near, get close”

إليَّ	“to me”
عبدي	“my servant,” the ي represents, “my”
بشيء	“with a thing, with anything,” the ب is “with, by,” شيء is "a thing"
أحب	“most beloved”
افترضته	“I have made it obligatory”
يزال	“he continues”
بالنّوافل	“by voluntary deeds,” the ب is “with, by”
أحبه	“I love him”
كنت	“I was”
سمعه	“his hearing”
بصره	“his vision”
يده	“his hand”
يبطش	“he strikes”
رجله	“his leg”
يمشي	“he walks”
لئن	“if… were”
سألني	“ask me”
لأعطينّه	“I would surely grant him,” the ل and the نّ imply stress, emphasis or certainty
استعاذني	“seek refuge in me”

Takhreej

From among the famous “six collections,”[1] this hadith was only recorded by Imam al-Bukhari. Al-Bukhari recorded it in “The Book of Hadith affecting the Emotions” in the chapter on humility. At the end of the hadith, one finds the following words that al-Nawawi omitted from his *40 Hadith*,

وَمَا تَرَدَّدْتُ عَنْ شَيْءٍ أَنَا فَاعِلُهُ تَرَدُّدِي عَنْ نَفْسِ الْمُؤْمِنِ يَكْرَهُ الْمَوْتَ وَأَنَا أَكْرَهُ مَسَاءَتَهُ

“And I do not hesitate to do anything as I hesitate to take the soul of the believer, for he hates death and I hate to harm him.”[2]

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[1] There are six collections of hadith that, due to historical events, began to be grouped together and referred to as “the six”. Usually, “the six” is a reference to the following works: *Sahih al-Bukhari*, *Sahih Muslim*, *Sunan al-Nasaai*, *Sunan Abu Dawood*, *Sunan al-Tirmidhi* and *Sunan ibn Maajah*. (Some replace *Sunan ibn Maajah* with the *Muwatta* of Maalik while others replace it with *Sunan al-Daarimi*.) Some even refer to these works as, “the six authentic collections.” Although it is true that the vast majority of the hadith in these six works are *sahih* or *hasan*, it is a bit of an exaggeration to refer to the six works as a whole as, “the six authentic collections,” as this makes people believe that all of the hadith that they contain are authentic.

[2] It is interesting to note that al-Nawawi also omitted those final words from his collection *Riyadh al-Saaliheen* (“Gardens of the Righteous”). This author is not aware of any explanation for this action on his part.

The hadith is also recorded by al-Baihaqi in *al-Zuhd al-Kabeer*, *Sunan al-Kubra* and in some of his other works. Al-Baghawi also recorded it in both *Sharh al-Sunnah* and *Masaabeeh al-Sunnah*.

Ibn Rajab points out that the chain of this hadith in *Sahih al-Bukhari* has been criticized by some scholars. This is because ibn Kiraamah has singularly narrated this hadith from Khaalid ibn Mukhlad. There is some question about Khaalid's status as a narrator of hadith.[1]

In general, the hadith in *Sahih al-Bukhari* are the cream of the crop of authentic hadith. It is very difficult to level any type of criticism toward them. Concerning those relatively few hadith that have been criticized, the criticisms have been easily responded to by other scholars. This particular hadith, though, was problematic for many scholars, to the point that al-Dhahabi said,

> That hadith is very *ghareeb* (strange). If it were not for the great respect for [al-Bukhari's] *al-Jaami al-Sahih*, I would have counted it among the rejected reports of Khaalid ibn Mukhlad.[2]

The hadith does have supporting evidence in hadith narrated from Aisha, ibn Abbaas, Abu Umaamah, Anas ibn Maalik, Ali ibn Abu Taalib and Hudhaifah. Most of those chains have some weakness. Many of the problems with them are major problems. However, there are some with minor problems. Therefore, taken as a whole, those with minor problems can support one another to make the hadith acceptable.[3]

General Comments About the Hadith

The importance of this hadith lies in its describing how one can become one of Allah's *auliyaa* (devoted servants and beloved). It describes the steps that need be followed and also describes the magnificent results that accrue to one who follows those steps.

Many important points can be derived from this hadith. It is, therefore, deserving of a very extensive commentary. Al-Shaukaani once noted,

> The commentators on this hadith, may Allah have mercy on them, did not give this hadith the full treatment that it deserves. Ibn Hajr, may Allah have mercy on him, only commented on this hadith in *Fath al-Baari* for about three pages, although his

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[1] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 330.

[2] al-Dhahabi, *Meezaan*, vol. 1, p. 641

[3] Cf., ibn Muhammad, pp. 210-214. Al-Albaani has discussed this hadith in detail and has concluded that it is authentic. See al-Albaani, *Silsilaat al-Ahadeeth al-Saheeha*, vol. 4, pp, 183-193.

> commentary is the most comprehensive commentary of al-Bukhari, with the most detail and benefit to it.[1]

Therefore, al-Shaukaani himself wrote a book explaining this hadith, covering some three hundred pages.

This hadith is one of many hadith that demonstrate the importance of interpreting the Prophet's words in the light of the entire teachings of the Quran and sunnah. This hadith has been misinterpreted by many over the years. Furthermore, it has been misinterpreted in very dangerous ways; such misinterpretations can actually lead one to blasphemous acts or beliefs.

About the Narrator: Abu Huraira

Abu Huraira was discussed under Hadith Number 9.

"Allah the Almighty has said"

This is a *qudsi* hadith. The third in this collection. A discussion of the concept of *qudsi* hadith may be found in the commentary to Hadith Number 24.

"Whoever has mutual animosity with a friend (Ar., *wali*) of Mine."

This *qudsi* hadith begins with a very stern warning: Allah declares war upon the one who opposes His devoted servants or His *auliyaa*.[2]

To understand this statement properly, the correct understanding of who is a *wali* of Allah must be established.

The Concept of *Wali* According to the Quran and Sunnah

Here the word *wali* (from the root *wala*) has been used. It has been translated as "friend" for lack of a better term. *Wali* (pl., *auliyaa*) or *walaaya* means, according to its Islamic understanding, support, love, honor, respect and being with one's beloved in both a spiritual and material sense.[3]

In Allah's description of the *auliyaa*, He points out two essential or necessary characteristics for anyone to be among the *auliyaa* of Allah. The first condition is *imaan* ("faith") while the second is *taqwa* ("God-consciousness"). Allah says in the Quran,

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[1] Muhammad ibn Ali al-Shaukaani, *Qatr al-Wali ala Hadeeth al-Wali* (Beirut: Daar Ihyaa al-Turaath al-Arabi, n.d.), pp. 229-230.

[2] The word لي ("Mine") appears before the ولي (*wali*), although it could be said the other way around. This has some significance in the Arabic language. It implies that the person is Allah's *wali* and only Allah's. Furthermore, the way it is stated implies a great dealing of honor to the one who is a *wali* of Allah. See al-Shaukaani, *Qatr*, p. 361.

[3] Muhammad ibn Saeed al-Qahtaani, *Al-Walaa wa al-Baraa fi al-Islaam* (Riyadh: Daar Taiba, n.d.), p. 90.

أَلَآ إِنَّ أَوۡلِيَآءَ ٱللَّهِ لَا خَوۡفٌ عَلَيۡهِمۡ وَلَا هُمۡ يَحۡزَنُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾ ٱلَّذِينَ
ءَامَنُواْ وَكَانُواْ يَتَّقُونَ

“Lo, verily the friends of Allah are those on whom fear comes not, nor do they grieve. Those who believe and keep their duty (Ar., *yattaqoon*) to Allah” (*Yoonus* 62-63). Al-Raazi points out that *imaan* and *taqwa* imply that they have a strong theoretical belief as well as correct practice and deeds. Hence, both theory and practice is exhibited by the *auliyaa* of Allah.[1] They are the ones who sincerely and continually obey Allah.[2]

The first and foremost of the *auliyaa* of Allah are those who are of the highest level of *imaan* and *taqwa*. They are most deserving of that honorific title. But Allah’s *auliyaa* are not all of the same rank. Instead, as many Quranic commentators have pointed out, they fall into one of three categories. Allah has said,

ثُمَّ أَوۡرَثۡنَا ٱلۡكِتَٰبَ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱصۡطَفَيۡنَا مِنۡ عِبَادِنَاۖ فَمِنۡهُمۡ ظَالِمٞ لِّنَفۡسِهِۦ
وَمِنۡهُم مُّقۡتَصِدٞ وَمِنۡهُمۡ سَابِقُۢ بِٱلۡخَيۡرَٰتِ بِإِذۡنِ ٱللَّهِۚ

“Then those who We chose of Our servants inherited the Book. But of them are some who wrong themselves and of them are some who are intermediate, and of them are some who outstrip others through good deeds, by Allah’s leave” (*Faatir* 32). The exact characteristics of these three groups have been explained in the books of Quranic commentary. Concerning those “who wrong themselves”, ibn Katheer says that they are the believers who are negligent in the performance of some of the obligatory duties and who perform some forbidden acts. Those “who are intermediate” are those who perform the obligatory duties and abstain from the forbidden acts yet at the same time do not perform all of the recommended acts and may perform some of the reprehensible (*makrooh*) acts. Those “who outstrip others through good deeds” are those who perform both the obligatory and recommended deeds and abstain from both the forbidden and reprehensible deeds.[3]

What this means is that, by the grace of Allah, perfection is not a requirement for being one of the *auliyaa* of Allah. Those who have *imaan* and *taqwa* and who may commit some sins are still fortunate enough to be among the *auliyaa* of Allah. At the same time, anyone who does not have *imaan* or *taqwa* and does not follow the guidance of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and yet claims to be one of the beloved of Allah is nothing but a liar.

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[1] Al-Raazi, vol. 5, p. 11.

[2] Ibn Hajr, *Fath* (al-Maktaba al-Tijaariyyah), vol. 13, p. 144.

[3] ibn Katheer, *Tafseer*, vol. 3, p. 609.

Furthermore, since faith and *taqwa* in the heart cannot be seen by others, it is not possible to know who exactly is a *wali* of Allah (unless, of course, such is stated in revelation from Allah). Unless Allah or the Prophet (peace be upon him) has stated that a particular person is one of His devoted servants, no one can claim for certainty that "so and so", no matter how pious he might outwardly seem, is definitely one of the *auliyaa* of Allah.[1]

The greatest of the *auliyaa* of Allah are the angels and messengers and then the prophets. After them come the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). They believed in Allah and obeyed Him. They sacrificed for the sake of Allah under the most difficult of times and they supported Allah's messenger. Allah has declared His approval of them.

After the Companions would come the true and sincere scholars of Islam. These are the "heirs of the Prophet" (peace be upon him). They act upon their knowledge. They also pass that knowledge on to others. They order what is right and eradicate what is evil. One of the early pious people said about the scholars, "If they are not the *auliyaa* of Allah, then there are no *auliyaa* of Allah."[2] Allah has said about them,

يَرْفَعِ ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ مِنكُمْ وَٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا۟ ٱلْعِلْمَ دَرَجَٰتٍ ۚ

"Allah will exalt in degree those of you who believe and those who have been granted knowledge" (*al-Mujaadilah* 11).

Allah Defends, Protects and Supports His *Auliyaa*

If a person is a *wali* ("close friend") of Allah, that, in turn, means that Allah is also his *wali*. This is because *wali* implies closeness and something cannot be close to something else without that other object also being close. Hence, both Allah and His *wali* become close to each other.[3]

Hence, Allah is the protector and *wali* of anyone who is His devoted servant and *wali*. This fact is explicitly stated by Allah in the Quran. Allah says,

ٱللَّهُ وَلِىُّ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ ٱلظُّلُمَٰتِ إِلَى ٱلنُّورِ ۖ وَٱلَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوٓا۟ أَوْلِيَآؤُهُمُ ٱلطَّٰغُوتُ يُخْرِجُونَهُم مِّنَ ٱلنُّورِ إِلَى ٱلظُّلُمَٰتِ ۗ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ
أَصْحَٰبُ ٱلنَّارِ ۖ هُمْ فِيهَا خَٰلِدُونَ

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[1] Cf., Mubaarak al-Meeli, *Risaalah al-Shirk wa Mudhaahiruhu* (Alexandria, Egypt: Maktaba al-Imaan, n.d.), p. 122.

[2] Quoted in al-Shaukaani, *Qatr*, p. 307.

[3] Cf., al-Raazi, vol. 5, p. 11.

"Allah is the Protecting Friend (*wali*) of those who believe. He brings them out of darkness into light. As for those who disbelieve, their patrons (*auliyaa*) are false deities. They bring them out of light into darkness. Such are rightful owners of the Fire. They will abide therein" (*al-Baqara* 257). Allah will protect His *auliyaa* in return for their observance of His laws, commands and prohibitions.

Incorrect and Heretical Concepts of Who is a *Wali*

According to Lauh, the above concept of *wali* was well-known and accepted among Muslims before the appearance of some heretical groups, in particular the Sufis.[1] This fact is admitted by some modern Sufi writers.[2] However, the Sufis did not confine their beliefs to the above aspects that are confirmed in the Quran and sunnah.

One of the mistakes of many of the Sufis is that they have confined this wide Quranic concept of *wali* of Allah and have claimed that the *auliyaa* of Allah are but a few special people. According to the correct Islamic beliefs, the most superior of the *auliyaa* of Allah are the prophets and messengers of Allah and, after them, the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). But many Sufis have come up with the strange idea that *wali* of Allah is a special rank. One poet stated, "The position of the *wali* in *barzakh*[3] is below the messengers and above the prophets."

Al-Qushairi, in his well-known *Risaalah*, a standard work for many Sufis, states that the *wali* worships Allah in such a way that there is no slip or gap for any act of disobedience whatsoever.[4]

Lauh's extensive research in this area has made him conclude that their goal is to raise the *wali* to the position of some kind of demi-god. People then serve him and worship him.[5] Among some Sufis is the belief that, besides being superior to the prophets, the *auliyaa* also have all of the attributes of

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[1] Hilaal points out that the distortion of the meaning of the term *wali* started first among the Shiah and was adopted and distorted further by the Sufis. This is just one of the areas in which there is a historical close bond between the Shiahs and the Sufis. For more on this point, see Ibraaheem Hilaal, Introduction to al-Shaukaani, *Qatr*, pp. 76-117; Ihsaan Ilaahi Dhaheer, *Al-Tasawwuf: al-Mansha wa al-Masaadir* (Lahore, Pakistan: Idaarah Tarjumaan al-Sunnah, 1986), pp. 137-275.

[2] Lauh quotes Abu al-Alaa Afeefi to substantiate his claim. See Muhammad Lauh, *Taqdees al-Ashkhaas fi al-Fikr al-Soofi* (al-Thuqbah, Saudi Arabia: Daar al-Hijrah, 1996), vol. 1, p. 52.

[3] *Barzakh* is one's life during the time between one's worldly death and the Day of Resurrection.

[4] Abdul Kareem al-Qushairi, *Al-Risaalah al-Qushairiyyah* (Cairo: Daar al-Kutub al-Hadeetha, n.d.), pp. 420-421. Lauh (vol. 1, pp. 57-59) quotes many Sufis who made similar statements. The Prophet (peace be upon him) described Umar ibn al-Khattaab as having the greatest insight and inspiration. However, Umar himself realized that he could not rely upon that insight. Everything he did had to be judged according to the Quran and sunnah. He took advice and consulted with his companions to ensure that what he was doing was correct. This further demonstrates that no one is ever in a position where he is free from error or is not in need of judging himself according to the Quran and sunnah. Cf., ibn Hajr, *Fath* (al-Maktaba al-Tijaariyyah), vol. 13, p. 148.

[5] Lauh, vol. 1, p. 57.

Allah and the Sufis pray to the *auliyaa* for aid in this world. This is, of course, a type of *shirk* or associating partners with Allah.[1]

These misconceptions, which are unfortunately not rare among some Muslims today, concerning the *auliyaa* of Allah must be corrected or eradicated. The *auliyaa* of Allah are the people of *imaan* and *taqwa* as clearly mentioned in the Quran.

Among the masses, even those who are not openly influenced by Sufism, the concept of *wali* has taken on a strange new meaning. As al-Meeli points out, the masses in many parts of the Muslim world consider the fortune-tellers, charmers, magicians and others as *auliyaa*— even if they are known to be completely ignorant of the religion, do not pray or fast and are known to commit all sorts of sins. The standard is no longer the adherence to the Quran and sunnah but the standard is whether or not the person can perform some kind of act that will amaze and astound the masses. If he can do that, he is considered a *wali.*[2]

The Statement is in the Reciprocal Form

The words من عادى ("whoever opposes") are in the reciprocal form. In other words, they mean whoever has an enmity with a *wali*, wherein the enmity is from both sides.

This has brought up the following question: How is it that a *wali* is having mutual animosity toward others when a *wali* should be forgiving and patient with those who do him wrong?

Ibn Hajr replies by saying that animosity is not merely of a worldly nature. The animosity described here is related to the kind of animosity that stems from the fact that one of the two persons is a *wali* of Allah, following the Quran and sunnah and free of innovations and evil.[3]

It is an obligation upon the believer to love and hate for the sake of Allah. This is why the pious person has enmity for these others; on the part of the *wali*, the enmity is solely for the sake of Allah. In this matter, they are following the example of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) who used to get very upset whenever the laws of Allah were violated.

Al-Shaukaani states that this kind of religious enmity only exists between: one who is following the Prophet (peace be upon him) vis-a-vis an innovator, one who is a complete believer vis-a-vis an evildoer, one who is a pious person vis-a-vis an impious person, one who is a scholar vis-a-vis an ignorant person or one who is from the devoted servants of Allah vis-a-vis an enemy of Allah.

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[1] See Lauh, *passim*; Abdul Rahmaan Abdul Khaaliq, *Al-Fikr al-Sufi fi Dhau al-Kitab wa al-Sunnah* (Kuwait: Maktaba ibn Taimiya, 1986), p. 38. The Sufis also have many other different ranks and orders in their beliefs, all of which have nothing to do with the teachings of the Quran and sunnah. Cf., Muhammad Amaan al-Jaami, "Al-Tasawwuf min Saur al-Jsahiliyya," *Majallat al-Bahooth al-Islaamiya* (Riyadh: Daar al-Ifta, Vol. 12, 1405 A.H.), pp. 285-287.

[2] Al-Meeli, pp. 122-123. A great danger that results from this incorrect understanding of *wali* is that such people who perform such tricks may be very impious and they use the people's belief that they are *auliyaa* to get money and other benefits from them.

[3] Cf., ibn Hajr, *Fath* (al-Maktaba al-Tijaariyyah), vol. 13, p. 144.

For example, the people of innovations, in general, hate those people who strictly follow the sunnah. Their hatred is solely based on the fact that those *auliyaa* are refusing to follow their innovations and heresies. Their hatred is intensified by the fact that many times the innovators know that the people who are truly following the Prophet (peace be upon him) have the knowledge and information that it takes to refute the people of innovations. Hence, the innovators' hatred for the people of the sunnah can be so great that they hate them even more than they hate the disbelieving Jews and Christians.[1]

Similarly, the evildoers hate the *auliyaa* because the *auliyaa* are against what they are doing. The *auliyaa* try to convince them to stop their practices and they also try to convince others not to join in with their evil. Furthermore, the *auliyaa* are reminders to the evildoers of the evil that they are doing and how they are supposed to behave with respect to Allah. Hence, the evildoers' hatred for the *auliyaa* is directly related to the fact that the *auliyaa* are obeying Allah and having *taqwa*.[2]

According to al-Shaukaani, the enmity that exists between a scholar and ignorant person is obvious. The scholar stays away from the ignorant person and has enmity toward him due to the latter's ignorance of the religion, his failure to learn the religion and his lacking in applying the religion.[3]

The closer one gets to Allah, the greater he will be envied and hated by those who want such blessings but are not willing to strive for them. They possess a strong hatred in their hearts for those who sacrifice and earn the love of Allah.

Ibn Hubairah also states that the meaning of this phrase is that the person opposes the other only because he is from the *auliyaa* of Allah.[4] When a person does that, then he is deserving of the punishment stated in this hadith. This is because he is opposing the *auliyaa* of Allah simply because they are obeying Allah. Hence, in reality, they are not just opposing the *auliyaa* of Allah but they are truly opposing Allah.

What is Not Meant by This Threat from Allah

The hadith being explained here is a warning to those who dislike the *auliyaa* of Allah or oppose them simply because they do their best to implement and follow the law of Allah. The enmity referred to in this hadith does not apply to worldly disputes that may occur between two people who still have a love for each other in their hearts. For example, Abu Bakr and Umar once disputed with each other, as did al-Abbaas and Ali. At the same time, they still loved each other for the sake of Allah and, furthermore, it is clear from the Quran and the sunnah that all four of them are from the *auliyaa* of Allah.[1]

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[1] Cf., al-Shaukaani, *Qatr*, p. 275.

[2] Cf., ibn Hajr, *Fath* (al-Maktaba al-Tijaariyyah), vol. 13, p. 144; al-Shaukaani, *Qatr*, pp. 273-275.

[3] Al-Shaukaani, *Qatr*, p. 274.

[4] Quoted in ibn Hajr, *Fath* (al-Maktaba al-Tijaariyyah), vol. 13, p. 144. Also see al-Sindi, ***Sharh***, p. 114.

If two believers—- two *auliyaa* or a *wali* and another person— have a dispute wherein each believes that the other has done some wrong, there is no harm if they take their dispute to the proper authorities to have their case decided. In fact, this is part of the goal of the judicial system in Islam. The dispute can be decided in a fair and just matter according to what is evident, the issue can be put behind them and there is no need for any hard feelings between the two disputants. Neither party should feel any hard feelings for the one who decided the matter, as long as the one did so justly based on the information placed in front of him.

However, if a person brings up a case against a *wali* that is definitely a false case and it is just meant to harm the *wali*, then the warning found in this hadith applies to such a person. He is wrongfully harming one of the *auliyaa* of Allah and, hence, Allah will protect His *wali.*[2]

Al-Haitami points out that the enmity referred to in this hadith does, however, include cursing or reviling the believers or not having the proper respect for them (such as for the Companions). These types of acts are not excused by the *shareeah.*[3]

"I declare war upon him."

This is the result of opposing the *auliyaa* of Allah simply because they are obeying Allah. Once again, this expression is in the reciprocal form; in other words, the two are going to war against each other. Hence, it implies that the person himself is also going to war against Allah. However, how can a human go to war against Allah when he is nothing more than Allah's slave? Ibn Hajr states that this was stated in this manner in order for the listener to understand exactly what is taking place. War is the result of enmity. Enmity is the result of differing with another. The goal of war is to destroy the enemy. Hence, in other words, this means that the person has exposed himself to being destroyed by Allah as a wartime enemy is destroyed by a much greater force.[4] Obviously, there is no force greater than Allah and there can be no destruction like that which Allah can mete out.

Al-Shaukaani adds that although a human is an insignificant creature and should not dare go to war against Allah, his own soul can deceive himself and think that he is capable of such a war. Therefore, he goes ahead and opposes Allah's *auliyaa* although he knows that such is hated by Allah.[1]

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[1] Cf., ibn Hajr, *Fath* (al-Maktaba al-Tijaariyyah), vol. 13, p. 144.

[2] Cf., al-Shaukaani, *Qatr*, pp. 277-281.

[3] Cf., al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 270.

[4] Ibn Hajr, *Fath* (al-Maktaba al-Tijaariyyah), vol. 13, p. 144.

The Importance of Having Love for Allah's *Auliyaa* and Its Contrary of Having Dislike for Allah's Enemies

One of the most important characteristic of a believer is his support and love for his fellow believers. In another hadith, the Messenger of Allah described the attributes possessed by the one who has tasted the sweetness of *imaan*. One of those characteristics is that he loves others solely for the sake of Allah.[2]

In the hadith under discussion here, Allah has given a warning to anyone who opposes His *auliyaa*; conversely, this may also be taken as a warning to those who support and love the enemies of Allah. Whoever dislikes something that Allah likes (such as the believers), opposes Allah. And whoever opposes Allah takes Him as his enemy. And whoever takes Allah as his enemy, Allah will destroy him. That is established for the one who opposes Allah's *auliyaa* and the opposite is the case for the one who supports believers and *auliyaa*.

This point is often forgotten by unjust rulers as well as by many common Muslims. Many Muslims today prefer or give preference to the unbelievers over the believers. Such people should consider that if anyone opposes the believers and *auliyaa* of Allah, then Allah has declared war against him. This, of course, means that Allah will destroy him (unless he repents) as no one can possibly be victorious when Allah declares war against him. And his destruction may occur both in this life and in the Hereafter, not necessarily just in the Hereafter. As ibn Hajr pointed out, whoever opposes a *wali* of Allah by either his speech or action or both has left himself open to being destroyed by Allah. And Allah will treat him in the same way that a wartime enemy is treated.[3]

Allah has promised to defend all of the believers and He protects their honor. That is, He does not wish to see them harmed by anyone. Allah says,

إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُدَٰفِعُ عَنِ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْۗ

"Lo, Allah defends those who believe" (*al-Hajj* 38).

Many people support and love the unbelievers, as opposed to the believers, in order to get honor, prestige, worldly benefits and so on. But it is the law of Allah that these dreams are never fulfilled if pursued in that manner. In fact, Allah makes it clear that such people are simply hypocrites who lose both this life and the Hereafter. Note the following verses from the Quran:

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[1] Al-Shaukaani, *Qatr*, p. 365.

[2] The complete hadith is: Anas reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "There are three characteristics, if anyone possesses them, he has tasted the sweetness of faith. [The three are:] Allah and His messenger are more beloved to him than anything else; he loves a person and he loves him solely for the sake of Allah; and he hates to return to *kufr* in the same way that he hates to be thrown into the Fire." (Recorded by al-Bukhari.)

[3] Ibn Hajr, *Fath* (al-Maktaba al-Tijaariyyah), vol. 13, p. 144.

لَّا يَتَّخِذِ ٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ ٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ أَوْلِيَآءَ مِن دُونِ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۖ وَمَن يَفْعَلْ
ذَٰلِكَ فَلَيْسَ مِنَ ٱللَّهِ فِى شَىْءٍ إِلَّآ أَن تَتَّقُوا۟ مِنْهُمْ تُقَىٰةً ۗ وَيُحَذِّرُكُمُ ٱللَّهُ
نَفْسَهُۥ ۗ وَإِلَى ٱللَّهِ ٱلْمَصِيرُ

“Let not the believers take the disbelievers for their friends in preference to the believers. Whoever does so has no connection with Allah, unless you indeed fear a danger from them. And Allah warns you concerning Himself. And to Allah is the final return.” (*ali-Imraan* 28).

بَشِّرِ ٱلْمُنَٰفِقِينَ بِأَنَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿١٣٨﴾ ٱلَّذِينَ يَتَّخِذُونَ ٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ
أَوْلِيَآءَ مِن دُونِ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۚ أَيَبْتَغُونَ عِندَهُمُ ٱلْعِزَّةَ فَإِنَّ ٱلْعِزَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا

“Bear unto the hypocrites the tidings that for them there is a painful doom, those who choose disbelievers for their friends instead of believers! Do they look for power at their hands? Lo, all power appertains to Allah” (*al-Nisaa* 138-9).

وَلِلَّهِ ٱلْعِزَّةُ وَلِرَسُولِهِۦ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَٰكِنَّ ٱلْمُنَٰفِقِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

“Might and honor belongs to Allah and to His messenger and the believers; but the hypocrites know not” (*al-Munaafiqoon* 8).

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ لَا تَتَّخِذُوا۟ عَدُوِّى وَعَدُوَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَآءَ تُلْقُونَ إِلَيْهِم
بِٱلْمَوَدَّةِ

“O you who believe! Do not take My enemy and your enemy as a friend, showing affection toward them” (*al-Mumtahina* 1).

Allah also says,

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ لَا تَتَّخِذُوا۟ ٱلْيَهُودَ وَٱلنَّصَٰرَىٰٓ أَوْلِيَآءَ ۘ بَعْضُهُمْ
أَوْلِيَآءُ بَعْضٍ ۚ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّهُم مِّنكُمْ فَإِنَّهُۥ مِنْهُمْ ۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِى ٱلْقَوْمَ
ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴿٥١﴾ فَتَرَى ٱلَّذِينَ فِى قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ يُسَٰرِعُونَ فِيهِمْ يَقُولُونَ

نَخْشَىٰٓ أَن تُصِيبَنَا دَآئِرَةٌ ۚ فَعَسَى ٱللَّهُ أَن يَأْتِىَ بِٱلْفَتْحِ أَوْ أَمْرٍ مِّنْ عِندِهِۦ
فَيُصْبِحُوا۟ عَلَىٰ مَآ أَسَرُّوا۟ فِىٓ أَنفُسِهِمْ نَـٰدِمِينَ

“O you who believe, take not the Jews and Christians for friends (*auliyaa*). They are friends one to another. He among you who takes them for friends is one of them. Lo, Allah guides not wrongdoing folk. And you see those in whose heart is a disease race toward them, saying, ‘We fear lest a change of fortune befall us.’ And it may happen that Allah will vouchsafe unto you the victory or a commandment from His presence. Then they will feel remorse for their secret thoughts” (*al-Maaidah* 51-52). Commenting on this verse, Maudoodi has written,

> This refers to the condition of the hypocrites during the period when the conflict between Islam and *kufr* had not come to any decisive conclusion. Although Islam had become a power by dint of the sacrifices of its followers, the opposing forces were also very powerful and there were equal chances of the victory of either side. The hypocrites, while living among the Muslims, wanted to keep good relations with the Jews and Christians so that if the conflict ended in the defeat of the Muslims, they might safely take refuge with their enemies. Then there was also the economic factor; at that time, the Jews and the Christians were economically the most powerful people in Arabia. The money-lending business was almost entirely in their hands and they had a strong economic hold upon the people. Moreover, the most fertile regions of Arabia were in their possession. This also led the hypocrites to preserve their old relations with them. In short, they considered it very dangerous to break relations with these people because of the conflict between Islam and *kufr*, for they feared that it might ruin them economically and politically.[1]

A cursory look at history will demonstrate that the enemies of the believers have time and again met the same fate. There is a *sunnah* of Allah or a “law of nature” at work here. For example, after the Muslims had ruled Spain for centuries, the Muslim rulers began to conspire and work with the Christians against their fellow Muslims. Abu Abdullah conspired with Ferdinand against his father Muhammad ibn Saad and against his uncle. Abu Abdullah and Ferdinand were victorious. Then Ferdinand turned against Abu Abdullah and also drove him out of Spain. It was Abu Abdullah who turned over the keys of the last Muslim city in Spain to the Christians. Abu Abdullah spent the last years of his life in poverty and begging in the streets of North Africa.

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[1] Abul Ala Maudoodi, *The Meaning of the Quran*, vol. 3, pp. 52-3, fn. 84.

Another more recent example is the fate of the Russian allies in Afghanistan. Leaders such as Dawood Khan, Nur Turaqi and Hafeedhullah Ameen were killed by the Russians whenever they were finished using them. Some of these Afghani leaders had been members of the Communist Party and close associates with the Russians for over twenty years but when their usefulness to the Russians came to an end, the Russians killed them. The Shah of Iran, the close ally of the West, could hardly find a country to accept him to live out the last days of his life in misery.

The punishment from Allah is not just for the leaders who fall in line with the unbelievers but, instead, it applies to anyone who supports the unbelievers and shows enmity to the believers. A case in point is ibn Abu Dawood who pleaded with the caliph to have Ahmad ibn Hanbal killed. The result, though, was that ibn Abu Dawood was the one who met a terrible death in this world while to this day Ahmad is still held in high esteem by the Muslims. Similarly, many of the people who tortured the Muslims in the prisons of Egypt during the 1950's and 1960's have, to this day, psychological problems and have troubles coping in this world that they are living in.[1]

But the greatest punishment that those who show enmity to the *auliyaa* of Allah will have to face will occur in the Hereafter. Allah says,

وَيَوْمَ يَعَضُّ ٱلظَّالِمُ عَلَىٰ يَدَيْهِ يَقُولُ يَـٰلَيْتَنِى ٱتَّخَذْتُ مَعَ ٱلرَّسُولِ سَبِيلًا
﴿٢٧﴾ يَـٰوَيْلَتَىٰ لَيْتَنِى لَمْ أَتَّخِذْ فُلَانًا خَلِيلًا ﴿٢٨﴾ لَّقَدْ أَضَلَّنِى عَنِ ٱلذِّكْرِ
بَعْدَ إِذْ جَآءَنِى ۗ وَكَانَ ٱلشَّيْطَـٰنُ لِلْإِنسَـٰنِ خَذُولًا

"On the day when the wrong-doer gnaws his hands, he will say, 'Ah, would that I had chosen a way together with the messenger of Allah. Alas for me. Ah, would that I had never taken such a one for friend. He verily led me astray from the Revelation of Allah after it had reached me.' Satan was ever man's deserter in the hour of need" (*al-Furqaan* 27-29).

يَوْمَ تُقَلَّبُ وُجُوهُهُمْ فِى ٱلنَّارِ يَقُولُونَ يَـٰلَيْتَنَآ أَطَعْنَا ٱللَّهَ وَأَطَعْنَا ٱلرَّسُولَا۠
﴿٦٦﴾ وَقَالُوا۟ رَبَّنَآ إِنَّآ أَطَعْنَا سَادَتَنَا وَكُبَرَآءَنَا فَأَضَلُّونَا ٱلسَّبِيلَا۠ ﴿٦٧﴾
رَبَّنَآ ءَاتِهِمْ ضِعْفَيْنِ مِنَ ٱلْعَذَابِ وَٱلْعَنْهُمْ لَعْنًا كَبِيرًا

"On the Day when their faces are turned over in the fire, they say, 'Oh would that we had obeyed Allah and had obeyed His messenger.' And they say, 'Our Lord, we obeyed our leaders and great men, and they misled us from the Way.

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[1] For references for the above historical events concerning Spain, Egypt, Turkey and Afghanistan, see al-Jalood, vol. 2, pp. 897-904.

Our Lord, give them double torment and curse them with a mighty curse’” (*al-Ahzaab* 66-68).

إِذۡ تَبَرَّأَ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱتُّبِعُواْ مِنَ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱتَّبَعُواْ وَرَأَوُاْ ٱلۡعَذَابَ وَتَقَطَّعَتۡ بِهِمُ
ٱلۡأَسۡبَابُ ﴿١٦٦﴾ وَقَالَ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱتَّبَعُواْ لَوۡ أَنَّ لَنَا كَرَّةٗ فَنَتَبَرَّأَ مِنۡهُمۡ كَمَا
تَبَرَّءُواْ مِنَّاۗ كَذَٰلِكَ يُرِيهِمُ ٱللَّهُ أَعۡمَٰلَهُمۡ حَسَرَٰتٍ عَلَيۡهِمۡۖ وَمَا هُم بِخَٰرِجِينَ مِنَ
ٱلنَّارِ

“(On the Day) when those who were followed disown those who followed them, and they behold the doom, and all their aims collapse with them. And those who were but followers will say, ‘If a return were possible for us, we would disown them even as they have disowned us.’ Thus will Allah show them their own deeds as anguish for them, and they will not emerge from the Fire” (*al-Baqara* 166-167).

Supporting or having love for the enemies of Allah will not aid the person at all in the Hereafter. He will be like the one who worshipped idols; the idols will not benefit him in the Hereafter. Such “Muslims” have practically taken the disbelieving people as their idols; they have preferred them to Allah, His messenger and the believers. Allah says,

وَقَالَ إِنَّمَا ٱتَّخَذۡتُم مِّن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ أَوۡثَٰنٗا مَّوَدَّةَ بَيۡنِكُمۡ فِي ٱلۡحَيَوٰةِ ٱلدُّنۡيَاۖ
ثُمَّ يَوۡمَ ٱلۡقِيَٰمَةِ يَكۡفُرُ بَعۡضُكُم بِبَعۡضٖ وَيَلۡعَنُ بَعۡضُكُم بَعۡضٗا
وَمَأۡوَىٰكُمُ ٱلنَّارُ وَمَا لَكُم مِّن نَّٰصِرِينَ

“He said, ‘You have chosen idols instead of Allah. The love between you is only in the life of the world. Then on the Day of Resurrection you will deny each other and curse each other, and your abode will be the Fire and you will have no helpers’” (*al-Ankaboot* 25).

Instead, one’s love must be for the believers. Allah says,

إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ ٱللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُۥ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ ٱلَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَيُؤۡتُونَ
ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ وَهُمۡ رَٰكِعُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّ ٱللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُۥ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ فَإِنَّ
حِزۡبَ ٱللَّهِ هُمُ ٱلۡغَٰلِبُونَ

“Your friend (*wali*) can only be Allah and His messenger and those who believe, who establish worship and pay the poor-due, and bow down (in prayer). And whoever takes Allah and His messenger and those who believe for friends (will know that), lo, the party of Allah, they are the victorious" (*al-Maaidah* 55-56).

A Societal Law or *Sunnah* of Allah

The importance of attaining Allah's love and giving one's love to Allah from the point of view of the society as a whole should also be noted. In the Quran, Allah sets down many "laws" which apply to the workings of entire communities and societies. One famous law that is quoted by many Muslims is from the verse,

إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوۡمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُواْ مَا بِأَنفُسِهِمۡۗ

"Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves" (*al-Rad* 11).[1]

Another law that Allah shows in the Quran is that any community of Muslims who in fact do not love Allah does not deserve to exist on this earth. Furthermore, this love of Allah that they must possess is one that is demonstrated by their deeds, including their willingness to sacrifice for the sake of Allah. The relevant verse concerning this law is,

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ مَن يَرۡتَدَّ مِنكُمۡ عَن دِينِهِۦ فَسَوۡفَ يَأۡتِي ٱللَّهُ بِقَوۡمٖ
يُحِبُّهُمۡ وَيُحِبُّونَهُۥٓ أَذِلَّةٍ عَلَى ٱلۡمُؤۡمِنِينَ أَعِزَّةٍ عَلَى ٱلۡكَٰفِرِينَ يُجَٰهِدُونَ فِي
سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ وَلَا يَخَافُونَ لَوۡمَةَ لَآئِمٖۚ

"O you who believe, whoever of you becomes a renegade from his religion, know that in his stead Allah will bring a people whom He loves and who love Him, humble toward the believers, stern toward the disbelievers, striving in the way of Allah and not the reproach of any one who reproaches" (*al-Maaidah* 54).[2] This verse shows that if the Muslim community turns away from the religion of Allah, does not love Allah, is not soft to the believers nor stern against the unbelievers, nor does it strive in the way of Allah without any fear of any harm, then it does not deserve to be left to exist and Allah will change that community and bring another people who do fit that description.

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[1] Commenting on this verse, Jaudat Saeed wrote, "[The verse makes clear] that this is a societal *sunnah* ('law of Allah') and not one that refers to individuals. The word 'people' [in the verse] means a plural or a community... One should not understand from the verse that it is referring to specific individuals. The proof for that is that Allah did not say, 'Verily Allah does not change the condition of a person until he changes what is in himself...' The person should keep this point in mind. It is not a condition that Allah will change the condition of a person if he changes what is in himself as it is similarly not a condition that Allah will not change the condition of a person if he does not change himself..." Jaudat Saeed, *Hatta Yughayyir ma bi-Anfusihim* (Damascus, 1984), p. 38.

[2] Allah ends the verse with the words, "Such is the grace of Allah which He gives unto whom He wills. Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing." This means that it is a wonderful grace to be given the love of Allah and that Allah is All-Embracing but All-Knowing at the same time and knows who deserves this great blessing and who does not deserve it.

Actually all of the deeds mentioned in this verse are simply an extension of having a love for Allah and, if a community is without those characteristics, it is a clear sign that they do not truly love Allah. Loving Allah also implies loving those things that Allah loves and disliking those things that Allah dislikes. Put into practice, this would include being soft and loving toward His believers and stern toward those who do not believe in Him. Similarly, when this love is put into action, it implies the willingness to stand up or sacrifice for the sake of the Beloved.

This verse from *surah al-Maaidah* is, in fact, closely related to the hadith under discussion here. The beginning of this hadith *qudsi* states, "Whoever shows enmity to a friend (Ar., *wali*) of Mine, I shall be at war with him." The verse in question states the law for the community as a whole but this hadith states the same law for the individual. In the former case, the community will be removed by a new community and, in the latter case, the individual will have Allah declare war upon him which means that he will be ruined. So in this case, the destruction of those who oppose the true believers while giving *wala* or love and loyalty to the unbelievers (as opposed to the believers) is not just a societal sunnah ("law of creation") but it applies to the individual also.

"My servant does not draw near to Me with anything more loved by Me than the religious duties I have imposed upon him."

After mentioning that no one should oppose the devoted servants of Allah, Allah then gives a description of those devoted servants or *auliyaa*. The root of the word *al-mawaala* (from which the word *auliyaa* is derived) is "to come closer".[1] Therefore, the real "devoted servants" or *auliyaa* of Allah are those who work to get closer to Allah by performing the deeds that take them closer to Him; and the true enemies of Allah are those who go farther away from Allah by performing those deeds that take them farther away from Him.

It is clear from this hadith that those who claim to love Allah and claim to get closer to Allah but at the same time do not follow the commands of Allah as stated by His messenger are actually lying— either to themselves out of ignorance or knowingly to everyone. This was the case with the polytheists who claimed to be getting closer to Allah by worshipping the intercessors that they invented. Allah says,

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[1] While the opposite of that, *al-muaadat*, means to "go farther away".

أَلَا لِلَّهِ ٱلدِّينُ ٱلْخَالِصُ ۚ وَٱلَّذِينَ ٱتَّخَذُوا۟ مِن دُونِهِۦٓ أَوْلِيَآءَ مَا
نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُونَآ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ زُلْفَىٰٓ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ فِى مَا هُمْ فِيهِ
يَخْتَلِفُونَ ۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِى مَنْ هُوَ كَـٰذِبٌ كَفَّارٌ

"Surely pure religion is for Allah only. And those who choose protecting friends beside Him (say): We worship them only that they may bring us near unto Allah. Lo, Allah will judge between them concerning that wherein they differ. Lo, Allah guides not him who is a liar, an ingrate" (*al-Zumar* 3).

The same is true for the Jews and Christians who claim to be the beloved "children" of God while at they same time they deny the messengers of God and the clear teachings of those messengers as found in their own scriptures. Allah says about them,

وَقَالَتِ ٱلْيَهُودُ وَٱلنَّصَـٰرَىٰ نَحْنُ أَبْنَـٰٓؤُا۟ ٱللَّهِ وَأَحِبَّـٰٓؤُهُۥ ۚ قُلْ فَلِمَ يُعَذِّبُكُم
بِذُنُوبِكُم ۖ بَلْ أَنتُم بَشَرٌ مِّمَّنْ خَلَقَ ۚ يَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَآءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَآءُ ۚ
وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ ٱلسَّمَـٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا ۖ وَإِلَيْهِ ٱلْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٨﴾ يَـٰٓأَهْلَ
ٱلْكِتَـٰبِ قَدْ جَآءَكُمْ رَسُولُنَا يُبَيِّنُ لَكُمْ عَلَىٰ فَتْرَةٍ مِّنَ ٱلرُّسُلِ أَن تَقُولُوا۟
مَا جَآءَنَا مِنۢ بَشِيرٍ وَلَا نَذِيرٍ ۖ فَقَدْ جَآءَكُم بَشِيرٌ وَنَذِيرٌ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ
شَىْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

"The Jews and Christians say: We are sons of Allah and His loved ones. Say: Why then does He chastise you for your sins? No, you are but mortals of His creating. He forgives whom He wills and chastises whom He wills. Allah's is the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them. And unto Him is the journeying. O people of the scripture, now has Our messenger come to you to make things plain after an interval (of cessation) of the messengers, lest you should say: There came not unto us a messenger of cheer nor one who warned. Now has a messenger of cheer and one who warns come unto you. Allah is able to do all things" (*al-Maaidah* 18-19).

Al-Shaukaani points out that the term, "getting closer" to Allah implies that the action is being done with pure sincerity. This is because if a person does not worship Allah purely and sincerely, he cannot be considered getting closer to Allah. He then says that a person who performs the obligatory deeds only to avoid the punishment from Allah has not performed the deed in the best manner that will take him closest to Allah.[1]

The Importance of Obligatory Deeds

This hadith makes it clear that the most important deeds that a person can perform to take himself closer to Allah are the deeds that Allah Himself has made obligatory upon His servants. Allah is the One who determined that His slaves must perform these deeds and, as is made clear here, He is most pleased by those deeds.[2]

Previously, based on a verse from the Quran, there was a discussion of three categories of Allah's *auliyaa*. However, another way of categorizing the *auliyaa* can be found in this particular hadith. In this manner, the *auliyaa* are divided into two groups: those who perform the obligatory deeds and those who perform both the obligatory deeds as well as the voluntary deeds..

As just mentioned, the first group gets closer to Allah by fulfilling the obligatory duties. This includes avoiding the forbidden deeds as that is a type of obligation from Allah.[3] These are known as the "companions of the right hand" (see *al-Waaqiah* 38). The performance of the obligatory duties is important and beloved to Allah. Umar ibn al-Khattaab said, "The most virtuous deed is to perform the deeds Allah has made obligatory and remain away from what Allah has forbidden accompanied with a pure intention in Allah's sight."[4] Umar ibn Abdul Azeez also said, "The best acts of worship is the fulfilling of what is obligatory and the abstaining from what is forbidden."[5] In fact, Allah has made those deeds obligatory upon the believer in order for the believer to get closer to Allah and to earn Allah's pleasure and mercy.

The obligatory deeds are like the foundation or roots while the voluntary deeds are like the branches. If a person first fulfills those foundations, he is demonstrating his foundation of being willing to submit to Allah. Hence, that is the best way that he earns his Lord's approval.[6] However, if one does not first fulfill those deeds that Allah has made obligatory, one does not demonstrate his willingness to submit and obey whatever Allah has ordered. Therefore, the first step must be the fulfillment of the obligatory duties.

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[1] Al-Shaukaani, *Qatr*, p. 369.

[2] The obligatory deeds referred to here, according to ibn Hajr, include both the deeds that are obligatory on the individuals as well as those deeds that are obligatory on the community as a whole. Ibn Hajr, *Fath* (al-Maktaba al-Tijaariyyah), vol. 13, p. 145.

[3] The prohibition of adultery, for example, is actually an *obligation* to avoid adultery. Many scholars even consider avoiding sins more important than performing the obligatory deeds. This is based on the hadith, discussed earlier in this collection, "When I order you to do something, then do what you can of it. And if I forbid you something, then do not go near it." (Recorded by al-Bukhari.)

[4] Quoted in ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 336.

[5] Quoted in ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 336.

[6] Cf., ibn Hajr, *Fath* (al-Maktaba al-Tijaariyyah), vol. 13, p. 145.

Some people do not seem to understand that Allah obligated specific deeds as a mercy to the believers. By performing the obligatory deeds the person actually comes closer to Allah and becomes a better person.[1] Allah says, for example, about the prayers,

إِنَّ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ تَنْهَىٰ عَنِ ٱلْفَحْشَآءِ وَٱلْمُنكَرِ ۗ

"Verily the prayers restrain one from evil and lewdity" (*al-Ankaboot* 45). And about the fast,

يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ ٱلصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

"O you who believe, fasting has been prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you in order for you to attain God-consciousness (*taqwa*)" (*al-Baqara* 183).

About the zakat, Allah has said,

خُذْ مِنْ أَمْوَٰلِهِمْ صَدَقَةً تُطَهِّرُهُمْ وَتُزَكِّيهِم بِهَا

"Take alms from their wealth in order to purify them and sanctify them by that" (*al-Tauba* 103).

One of the deeds that brings the person closest to Allah is the prayer. Allah says in the Quran,

وَٱسْجُدْ وَٱقْتَرِب

"But prostrate yourself and draw near (unto Allah)" (*al-Alaq* 19). The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said

أَقْرَبُ مَا يَكُونُ الْعَبْدُ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَهُوَ سَاجِدٌ

"The closest a servant is to his Lord is when he is prostrating." (Recorded by Muslim.)

The obligatory deeds first and foremost include the obligatory deeds of the heart. These include having a pure intention, being honest and sincere, having patience, being repentant, being free of envy and hatred toward the believers, being free of pride and arrogance, being free of superstitions and so forth.[2]

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[1] This point was discussed in more detail in the commentary to Hadith Number 3.

[2] Cf., Hilaal, pp. 145-146.

"My servant continues to draw near to Me with supererogatory works so that I shall love him."

The Importance of Voluntary Deeds

As alluded to earlier, the second group moves even closer to Allah by not only fulfilling the obligatory duties but by also additionally performing the voluntary deeds (and these are numerous). When a person performs the obligatory deeds, he demonstrates his willingness to submit to Allah. In addition, he is doing what he needs to do to protect himself from Allah's punishment. However, if on top of those deeds he also performs voluntary deeds, this demonstrates his sincerity to Allah and his true willingness to please Allah. This is no longer a matter of fulfilling a command from Allah or rescuing oneself from punishment. Now one is doing the acts to get even closer and become more beloved to Allah.[1]

Ibn Hajr points out that, in general, a person becomes beloved to another by doing more than the minimum or doing more than what is simply required. If a person, for example, returns money to another person and he also gives him some presents in addition, he is usually more beloved to the other person than the one who simply returned the money. The same aspect is true with respect to Allah, in a manner, of course, that is befitting of Allah and free of any imperfections.[2]

The performance of voluntary deeds also includes staying away from the disliked acts. These people exert themselves to come even closer to their beloved Lord by performing more deeds of obedience for His sake and staying away from the acts that are simply disapproved of.

There is ample evidence showing that the truly pious person must stay away from those things that are simply disliked (that is, not strictly forbidden) as well as those matters that are simply doubtful. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

اجْعَلُوا بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَ الْحَرَامِ سُتْرَةً مِنَ الْحَلالِ

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[1] Al-Nawawi (*Sharh al-Arbaeen*, p. 143) states that the meaning of Allah loving someone is that Allah wants good for that person. He and others have made similar statements because they are not willing to accept the fact that Allah could have love for someone, as love implies some emotions that are befitting humans but not befitting Allah. There is no need for such interpretations. Allah loves His *auliyaa*. That is a true love but it is also a love that is becoming of Allah and it does not have the deficiencies that a human love has.

[2] Ibn Hajr, *Fath* (al-Maktaba al-Tijaariyyah), vol. 13, p. 145.

"Place between you and the forbidden acts a covering [or barrier] of permissible acts."[1] In another hadith found in this collection of al-Nawawi, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) stated,

دَعْ مَا يَرِيبُكَ إِلَى مَا لاَ يَرِيبُكَ

"Leave what makes you doubt for what does not make you doubt."[2]

Also the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, in yet another hadith in this collection by al-Nawawi,

إِنَّ الْحَلالَ بَيِّنٌ وَإِنَّ الْحَرَامَ بَيِّنٌ وَبَيْنَهُمَا أُمُورٌ مُشْتَبِهَاتٌ لا يَعْلَمُهُنَّ كَثِيرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ فَمَنِ
اتَّقَى الشُّبُهَاتِ فَقَدْ اسْتَبْرَأَ لِدِينِهِ وَعِرْضِهِ وَمَنْ وَقَعَ فِي الشُّبُهَاتِ وَقَعَ فِي الْحَرَامِ
كَالرَّاعِي يَرْعَى حَوْلَ الْحِمَى يُوشِكُ أَنْ يَرْتَعَ فِيهِ أَلاَ وَإِنَّ لِكُلِّ مَلِكٍ حِمًى أَلا وَإِنَّ
حِمَى اللَّهِ مَحَارِمُهُ

"That which is lawful is plain and that which is unlawful is plain and between the two of them are doubtful [or ambiguous] matters about which not many people are knowledgeable. Thus, he who avoids these doubtful matters clears himself in regard to his religion and his honor. But he who falls into the doubtful matters falls into that which is unlawful like the shepherd who pastures around a sanctuary, all but grazing therein. Verily every king has a sanctuary and Allah's sanctuary is His prohibitions." (Recorded by al-Bukhari, Muslim and others.)

Unfortunately, too many people consider the "legal" definition of *makrooh* (a disliked act), which states that it is an act that the person will be rewarded for avoiding and will not be punished for committing, and consider it permissible to engage in such actions. But the pious Muslim must look beyond such a legal definition and consider the act from another point of view: what is the value of that act in Allah's sight. When looked at from this angle, the nature of the disliked acts, although they are not forbidden, radically changes. The person who is seeking the love of Allah can place no value in such acts and can receive no joy or benefit from performing them. Therefore, he does his best to remain away from them although, according to the jurists, they are not strictly forbidden.

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[1] Recorded by ibn Hibbaan. Al-Albaani declared it *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Silsilat al-Ahadeeth al-Saheeha*, vol. 2, p. 594-596.

[2] Recorded by Ahmad, al-Tirmidhi and ibn Hibbaan. This was Hadith Number 11 of this collection.

Furthermore, when a person involves himself in the disliked deeds, he may very easily fall into committing the forbidden acts. The case is different with those people who avoid even the disliked deeds. If these people should slip, as all humans are apt to do, then, most likely, they will simply slip into the disliked deeds and not fall all the way to those deeds that are greatly hated by Allah.

Another important aspect of the voluntary deeds that, unfortunately, some people tend to forget or neglect is that they make up for the shortcomings of the obligatory deeds that the person performs. It can be argued that very few Muslims, if any, perform the prayer in the manner that they are supposed to perform it. Many Muslims move about while praying, fidgeting with their clothing, looking here and there. And, more importantly, for many of them, their hearts are not attuned to the prayers. Satan comes to them and makes them think about almost everything except what they should be concentrating on in their prayers. Again, this is the case with many Muslims, even with some who are righteous. But the difference between the righteous and the lackadaisical Muslims is that the righteous make up for such shortcomings by performing voluntary prayers (or deeds in general) that take them closer to Allah. In another hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him), it is clear that this principle is true for all of the actions that a person performs. Abu Huraira reported that the Messenger of Allah said,

إِنَّ أَوَّلَ مَا يُحَاسَبُ بِهِ الْعَبْدُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مِنْ عَمَلِهِ صَلَاتُهُ فَإِنْ صَلُحَتْ فَقَدْ أَفْلَحَ وَأَنْجَحَ
وَإِنْ فَسَدَتْ فَقَدْ خَابَ وَخَسِرَ فَإِنِ انْتَقَصَ مِنْ فَرِيضَتِهِ شَيْءٌ قَالَ الرَّبُّ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ
انْظُرُوا هَلْ لِعَبْدِي مِنْ تَطَوُّعٍ فَيُكَمَّلَ بِهَا مَا انْتَقَصَ مِنَ الْفَرِيضَةِ ثُمَّ يَكُونُ سَائِرُ عَمَلِهِ
عَلَى ذَلِكَ

"The first deeds for which the slave of Allah will be held accountable on the Day of Judgment will be his prayers. If they are in order, he will have prospered and been successful. But if they are wanting, he will have failed and been a loser. If there is some shortcoming in his obligatory prayers, the Lord will say, 'See if My slave has any voluntary prayers with which may be completed that which was wanting in his obligatory prayers.' Then the rest of his deeds will be judged in like fashion."[1]

Therefore, it is no wonder that such people, who perform the voluntary deeds (which includes staying away from the disliked deeds), receive the love of Allah in both this life and in the Hereafter. Allah says about such a servant,

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[1] Recorded by al-Tirmidhi and others. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 1, p. 405.

"My servant continues to draw near to Me with supererogatory works so that I shall love him."

In this hadith, Allah describes those persons who have earned His love. This makes this a most important hadith. This is the goal of the true believers: to gain the love, mercy, pleasure and forgiveness of Allah. In other words, the goal is to become a *wali* of Allah. Unfortunately, some Muslims do not seem to realize what a great blessing this achievement is. No one can take the person's religion or Allah's love from him. It is, indeed, the greatest blessing. Anyone, by Allah's leave, may destroy whatever another person possesses and prizes of this world. But no one can ever touch his religion and his relationship to Allah.

This love of Allah leads to all the good in the heavens and the earth. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ إِذَا أَحَبَّ عَبْدًا دَعَا جِبْرِيلَ فَقَالَ إِنِّي أُحِبُّ فُلَانًا فَأَحِبَّهُ قَالَ فَيُحِبُّهُ جِبْرِيلُ ثُمَّ
يُنَادِي فِي السَّمَاءِ فَيَقُولُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ فُلَانًا فَأَحِبُّوهُ فَيُحِبُّهُ أَهْلُ السَّمَاءِ قَالَ ثُمَّ يُوضَعُ
لَهُ الْقَبُولُ فِي الْأَرْضِ

"If Allah loves a slave, He announces to Gabriel, 'Verily Allah loves so and so, so love him.' Then Gabriel loves him and he announces to the inhabitants of the heavens, 'Verily Allah loves so and so, so love him.' Then the inhabitants of the heavens love him. And then he is granted the acceptance of the people on earth." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

Allah Himself will never take this special relationship and love away from the person as long as that person is sincere to Allah. Indeed, in His ever abundant mercy to His creatures, He turns to them whenever they turn to Him. This is made clear in another hadith *qudsi* in which Allah says,

أَنَا عِنْدَ ظَنِّ عَبْدِي بِي وَأَنَا مَعَهُ إِذَا ذَكَرَنِي فَإِنْ ذَكَرَنِي فِي نَفْسِهِ ذَكَرْتُهُ فِي نَفْسِي وَإِنْ
ذَكَرَنِي فِي مَلَإٍ ذَكَرْتُهُ فِي مَلَإٍ خَيْرٍ مِنْهُمْ وَإِنْ تَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ بِشِبْرٍ تَقَرَّبْتُ إِلَيْهِ ذِرَاعًا وَإِنْ
تَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ ذِرَاعًا تَقَرَّبْتُ إِلَيْهِ بَاعًا وَإِنْ أَتَانِي يَمْشِي أَتَيْتُهُ هَرْوَلَةً

"I am as My servant expects Me to be. I am with him when he makes mention of Me. If he makes mention of Me to himself, I make mention of him to Myself. And if he makes mention of Me in an assembly, I make mention of him in an assembly better than it. And if he draws near to Me a hand's span, I draw near to him a forearm's length. And if he draws near to Me a forearm's length, I draw near to him an arm's length. And if he comes to Me walking, I go to him at speed." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

When a believer gets to that state, then all the minor things of this life become irrelevant. Any harm that should come to him, any worldly disaster or the like thereof, will not mean anything to him as long as he knows that by his actions he is pleasing Allah.

Many unbelievers of today are fond of saying, "As long as I have my health I cannot complain," but to the true believer even his health is not of everlasting importance. Indeed, to him, his health is simply an important resource and blessing from Allah to be used for the sake of Allah.[1] But if his health and everything else of this world is taken from him and he is left in a most miserable condition, he will still have happiness as long as he knows that the deeds that he is performing are those that Allah wants him to perform.[2]

This puts the believer on a completely different level from the rest of humanity who are not blessed with the knowledge of their Lord and Creator. This level comes when the person tastes the sweetness of faith, when he comes to realize and experience the real meaning of "There is no one worthy of worship except Allah." This sweetness of faith is a type of paradise in this world, as ibn Taimiya once said, "There is a paradise in this world and the one who does not enter it will not enter the paradise in the next world." This paradise is that which is achieved by performing the obligatory deeds followed by the voluntary deeds, all done for the sake of Allah and according to the revelation from Allah.

Allah's Mercy as Exhibited in the Voluntary Deeds

Allah, the Creator and Fashioner of humans, has obligated certain deeds. Those are deeds that are needed by all humans for the purification of their souls. Beyond those deeds, though, Allah has left the door wide open for individuals to concentrate on those deeds that they are most inclined to. For example, some people are dedicated to the voluntary prayers. They receive great increases in their faith and benefit from them. They feel sorrow whenever they miss those prayers. Hence, they tend to them to the best of their ability. Those voluntary prayers— in addition to the general obligatory deeds— may be the way that they get closer to Allah. It may be the key to them entering Paradise. Others may be attracted to fasting, charity or the pilgrimage.

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[1] Of course, given that it is such an important need for the one who wants to strive and work for the sake of Allah, it becomes obligatory upon that believer to preserve his health as this will help him become a stronger worker for the sake of Allah.

[2] The essence of this point is demonstrated in the Prophet's supplication to Allah, "O Allah, give us certainty [in faith] such that it would make the hardships of this world easy upon us... And do not make our trials related to our religion..." [Recorded by al-Tirmidhi. According to al-Albaani, it is *hasan*. See al-Albaani, *Sahih Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, vol. 3, p. 168.] The greatest harm that could come to any Muslim is the type of trial that could affect his relationship with Allah and because of his own shortcomings make him a weaker Muslim. The Prophet has instructed, by example, that the Muslim should ask Allah to keep him safe from such a trial. And the first part of the supplication demonstrates that the person with a firm faith will be able to face any trial related to this world.

There are others who are more inclined to doing good toward others. They perform the obligatory deeds and then beyond that they spend their time tending to others' needs. Those good voluntary deeds bring them closer to Allah and more beloved to Him. Yet others are attracted to voluntary jihad, teaching the religion, calling non-Muslims to Islam and so forth. When these people tend to those matters, they become the key by which they come closer to Allah and enter Paradise. Someone else might do a little of all of the different types of voluntary deeds and that is what makes him beloved to Allah.[1]

This reality is all by the mercy of Allah. Beyond the obligatory deeds, people are free to pursue those good voluntary deeds that they are most attracted to. There are so many areas of voluntary deeds that it seems inconceivable that a person could not find some voluntary deed or deeds that he would like to perform in order to get closer to Allah. Allah's path to paradise is wide enough to accommodate all of those different leanings. However, this is all dependent on the individual first fulfilling, in general, the obligatory deeds. If the person does not do that, then he may not be on the straight path at all.

A Possible Source of Confusion

It seems that this hadith is saying that the most beloved deeds to Allah are the obligatory deeds but a person does not become beloved to Allah until he performs the voluntary deeds. It seems that a person should become beloved to Allah simply by the performance of the obligatory deeds without any need to also perform voluntary deeds.

This point has been clarified by a number of commentators. Ibn Hajr, for example, responds by saying that what is meant by the voluntary deeds here are those deeds that complement and complete the obligatory deeds.[2] In other words, as was noted earlier, it is by the voluntary deeds that one truly completes and fulfills the shortcomings in the obligatory deeds. Hence, the obligatory deeds are never really completed without the voluntary deeds. Therefore, it is through the two of them that one becomes beloved to Allah.

That response, though, does not seem satisfactory. Indeed, al-Shaukaani has gone to great lengths to show that it is not the correct explanation. He states that a person performs the obligatory deeds because he knows that they are obligatory and if he does not perform them, he may be punished. That, in itself, is sufficient to drive him to perform those deeds. As for the voluntary deeds, he knows that there is not going to be any punishment awaiting him if he does not perform them. When he performs the voluntary deeds, he is doing so simply to get closer to Allah and not because they are a must upon him. Hence, he is doing them out of his love to get closer to Allah. The reward for that deed is a special love from Allah, even though the obligatory deeds receive a greater reward.

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[1] Cf., Quoted by Fareed (pp. 30-31) from Muhammad ibn al-Qayyim, *Tareeq al-Hijratain*, p. 179.

[2] Ibn Hajr, *Fath* (al-Maktaba al-Tijaariyyah), vol. 13, p. 145.

Like ibn Hajr before him, al-Shaukaani also states that such a phenomenon can be witnessed among humans. Suppose a person has two slaves or servants. The first of them fulfills what the master requires of him. Therefore, the master is pleased with him because he has no shortcoming in his performance. However, the second one does what his master asks of him and, beyond that, he does other things that he knows that his master would like. The only reason he does those deeds is because he knows that they are pleasing to his master. The master then will be pleased with the second slave and he will also have a special love for him due to those extra actions that he is performing.

This is the love, al-Shaukaani argues, that this hadith is referring to. It is the additional love that Allah bestows upon a person for doing deeds that Allah has not obligated of him. The slave is doing more than what is required of him simply to please Allah more. Therefore, this is a different type of love. The one who performs the obligatory deeds is beloved to Allah. There is no question about that. But the one who goes beyond that is even more beloved to Allah and gets the special love from Allah that is described herein. Hence, there are two types of love that come about due to two different cause. But, it should not be forgotten, that the first cause is a prerequisite for the second type of love. In other words, if a person does not perform the obligatory deeds, he will not receive the first or second type of love, even if he performs numerous voluntary deeds.[1]

The result of this second type of love is what is described in the following portion of the hadith: Allah becomes the person's hearing by which he hears and so forth.

> "When I love him, I am his hearing with which he hears, his seeing with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes, and his foot with which he walks."[2]

The most obvious question that arises from these words of the hadith is: How does Allah become a person's hearing, seeing and so forth? This question has been answered in a number of ways. Ibn Hajr presents seven different interpretations for this passage.[3] There are yet others that ibn Hajr did not mention. These include the following (note that some of them may be overlapping):

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[1] Al-Shaukaani, *Qatr*, pp. 419-421.

[2] Other versions of the same hadith state that Allah also becomes, "his heart with which he reflects and his tongue with which he speaks."

[3] Ibn Hajr, *Fath* (al-Maktaba al-Tijaariyyah), vol. 13, pp. 146-147.

(1) It is a kind of metaphor. Its meaning is, "I become like his seeing and hearing with respect to his being influenced by My command. He loves to obey Me in a way as strong as his love for the limbs of his body." Al-Shaukaani states that this interpretation is far-fetched. It requires a severe twisting of the meaning of the words and it also contradicts another narration which states, "And by Me he hears and by Me he sees."[1]

(2) The person's whole being becomes busy with what is related to Allah. Hence, he never listens to anything except what is pleasing to Allah. He never looks at anything except what is pleasing to Allah and so forth. This is the understanding of al-Khattaabi and al-Daawoodi. Al-Shaukaani states that this is better than the first interpretation.[2]

(3) The person makes Allah his goal and purpose and, therefore, it is as if Allah has become the person's hearing, seeing and so forth. Al-Shaukaani argues that this interpretation makes no sense. It virtually robs the phrases of the hadith from any significance whatsoever. For example, there would be no significance in mentioning leg and hand if this were the correct interpretation.[3]

(4) Allah supports His *wali* in the same way that a person uses his hands and legs to fight his enemy. According to al-Toofi, there is agreement among the scholars who are respected that this hadith is allegorical and it is in reference to Allah's helping and supporting His *wali.* Al-Shaukaani, though, argues that Allah is much greater than being compared to the weak arms and legs that a human possesses to fight off his enemy. Allah's help is much greater than what an individual could ever possibly muster by those limbs.[4]

(5) Allah protects the person's hearing to the point that he only hears what is good and pleasing to Allah. This interpretation requires *taqdeer* (assuming some missing words) and is, in essence, similar to the second interpretation stated above.

(6) A sixth meaning is a little more detailed than the fifth. In this interpretation, Allah becomes what the person listens to or hears, sees and so forth. In other words, the person only listens to "My remembrance"; he only finds pleasure in reciting "My book"; he only sees the splendor of "My creation" and so forth. Al-Shaukaani finds this interpretation even more far-fetched than the previous interpretation. He argues that if this is the understanding, what is one going to say about Allah becoming the person's leg and hand? Furthermore, he argues, this interpretation is not compatible with other authentic narrations of this hadith.[5]

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[1] Al-Shaukaani, *Qatr*, p. 428.
[2] Al-Shaukaani, *Qatr*, p. 429.
[3] Al-Shaukaani, *Qatr*, p. 429.
[4] Al-Shaukaani, *Qatr*, p. 429.
[5] Al-Shaukaani, *Qatr*, p. 430.

(7) A seventh interpretation, that ibn Hajr ascribes to al-Khattaabi, is that these words refer to how quickly Allah responds to such a person's supplications which he makes by means of the limbs mentioned in this hadith. Al-Shaukaani quickly brushes this interpretation aside by saying that it has no relevance to the wording of the hadith itself.[1]

(8) An eighth interpretation is given by Muhammad Rasheed Ridha. According to him, this hadith implies that Allah turns evil and lewdness away from His *wali*. He guides His *wali* to what pleases Him. It is by this guidance and blessing that a person now hears, sees, grasps, walks and ponders. He no longer follows his desires and lusts but he follows that guidance coming from Allah.[2]

(9) In this author's view, ibn Rajab's explanation seems to be one of the best. According to him,

> Whenever anyone strives to get close to Allah by performing the obligatory deeds and then the voluntary deeds, he will come closer to Him and it will raise him from the degree of faith to the degree of *ihsaan*[3] and he will begin to worship Allah with an aura of [His] presence and watching as if he is seeing Him and his heart is filled with the recognition of Allah, His love, His grandeur, fear of Him, reverence for Him and His greatness. He will become delighted by His presence and crave turning to Him until his heart is so filled with the clear recognition of Him that it will be as if he is seeing Him with his eyes.[4]

When the heart is filled with the greatness of Allah, there is no room in the heart for anything else. The slave gets to a point where he abandons his own desires and cravings and only desires those things that Allah is pleased with. At that time, when he looks, he looks for the sake of Allah; when he speaks, he speaks for the sake of Allah; when he listens, he listens for the sake of Allah. This seems to be a plausible meaning for Allah's words in this hadith, "I am his hearing with which he hears, his seeing with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes..."

Allah describes the pious people for whom He becomes their eyes, ears and so on, in the Quran. They are the type of people who do not even turn to the evil that they see. They are completely numb to the effects of others' sins. This does not mean that they do not fulfill their duty of ordering good and eradicating evil but it means that they cannot even be tempted by the evil around them. Allah says about them in the Quran,

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[1] Al-Shaukaani, *Qatr*, p. 433.

[2] Quoted by Hilaal, p. 435.

[3] In the famous hadith of the Angel Gabriel, the Prophet (peace be upon him) defined *ihsasn* as, "Worshipping Allah as if you see Him and, [although] you do not see Him, [you know] that He sees you." That is Hadith Number 2 in this collection.

[4] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 345-346.

وَإِذَا سَمِعُواْ ٱللَّغْوَ أَعْرَضُواْ عَنْهُ وَقَالُواْ لَنَآ أَعْمَٰلُنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَٰلُكُمْ سَلَٰمٌ
عَلَيْكُمْ لَا نَبْتَغِى ٱلْجَٰهِلِينَ

"And when they hear vanity, they withdraw from it and say: Unto us our works and unto you your works. Peace be unto you. We desire not the ignorant" (*al-Qasas* 55). And,

وَعِبَادُ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى ٱلْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ
ٱلْجَٰهِلُونَ قَالُواْ سَلَٰمًا

"The faithful slaves of the Beneficent are those who walk on the earth modestly and when the foolish ones address them answer: Peace" (*al-Furqaan* 63).

This refers to the real essence of pure *tauheed*. The complete meaning of "*la ilaaha illa-llaah*" means that the person devotes all of his love, hope, fear and obedience to Allah only. If the person's heart is completely filled with this *tauheed*, then there is no love or hatred left in his heart save the love for that which Allah loves and the hatred for that which Allah hates. When a person reaches that state, all of his actions will be in the service and obedience of Allah. In fact, sins only arise when the person loves something Allah hates or dislikes something Allah loves— even if just for a fleeting moment. At moments like that, the person will commit a sin; that is, he will perform an act which is not pleasing to Allah. He will, at that moment, prefer the desires of his own soul over the love and fear of Allah. This is actually a type of deficiency with respect to the complete and obligatory *tauheed*.[1]

(10) Al-Shaukaani offers his own interpretation and supports it with a great deal of evidence. He says that the meaning is that Allah supports those limbs mentioned in this hadith by His Light. By this Light, Allah makes bright the path of guidance for the person. The Quran states that Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. Furthermore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to make the following supplication in his prayers,

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[1] Cf., ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, pp. 345-348. Unfortunately, ibn Rajab, to substantiate some of the points made above, quotes the hadith, "Whoever spends the morning and his thoughts are on other than Allah, then he is not from Allah [that is, from the beloved of Allah]." It is amazing that ibn Rajab who was very knowledgeable in hadith would quote such a hadith. The hadith is actually very weak or fabricated and he should not have recorded it. See Muhammad Naasir al-Deen al-Albaani, *Silsilat al-Ahadeeth al-Dhaeefa* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islaami, 1398 A. H.) , vol. 2, pp. 320-323.

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْ فِي قَلْبِي نُورًا وَفِي بَصَرِي نُورًا وَفِي سَمْعِي نُورًا وَعَنْ يَمِينِي نُورًا وَعَنْ يَسَارِي نُورًا وَفَوْقِي نُورًا وَتَحْتِي نُورًا وَأَمَامِي نُورًا وَخَلْفِي نُورًا وَاجْعَلْ لِي نُورًا

“O Allah, place light in my heart, light in my sight, light in my hearing, light on my right side, light on my left side, light above me, light below me, light in front of me and light behind me. And make for me a light.” (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

There is nothing to prevent Allah from supporting His servant by His light such that the person becomes clean of the impurities of this animal life and walks on a plane that is more akin with the spiritual world. He hears by Allah’s light. He sees by Allah’s light. He grasps by Allah’s light. He walks by Allah’s light. Such an occurrence is not inconceivable with respect to Allah.

This means that the true *wali* hears with the help of light from Allah. Hence, he does not hear like others hear. With respect to sensory matters, for example, he senses aspects that the others simply do not sense. With respect to the limbs, for example, they now have strength or ability that goes beyond what most people have.

This interpretation, al-Shaukaani also argues, is most consistent with the other authentic narrations of this hadith that state, “By Me he hears, by Me he sees, by Me he grasps and by Me he walks.”[1]

The Path of Purification According to the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him)

This hadith describes how the person becomes beloved to Allah. In reality, this hadith, therefore, is describing how a person can purify himself. It is by purification of one’s soul and heart that one becomes close to Allah and becomes truly successful. As Allah says,

يَوْمَ لَا يَنفَعُ مَالٌ وَلَا بَنُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾ إِلَّا مَنْ أَتَى ٱللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ

“The Day [of Judgment] whereon neither wealth nor sons will avail, except him who comes to Allah with a clean, sound heart” (*al-Shuaraa* 88-89). Elsewhere, after stating ten different oaths, Allah says,

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَن زَكَّىٰهَا ﴿٩﴾ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَن دَسَّىٰهَا

“Certainly, one who purifies himself has succeeded. And certainly one who corrupts himself has failed” (*al-Shams* 9-10).

The purification of the soul is one of the main reasons for which the Prophet (peace be upon him) was sent. Allah says in the Quran,

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[1] Al-Shaukaani, *Qatr*, pp. 433-435.

هُوَ ٱلَّذِى بَعَثَ فِى ٱلْأُمِّيِّـۧنَ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُوا۟ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايَـٰتِهِۦ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ
وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ ٱلْكِتَـٰبَ وَٱلْحِكْمَةَ وَإِن كَانُوا۟ مِن قَبْلُ لَفِى ضَلَـٰلٍ مُّبِينٍ

"He it is who sent among the unlettered ones a messenger from among themselves, reciting to them His verses, purifying them, and teaching them the Book and the Sunnah. And, verily, they had been in manifest error" (*al-Jumuah* 2). This purification of the soul is, obviously, for the benefit of the human himself. It does not help or benefit Allah in the least.

Since the Prophet (peace be upon him) was sent to purify the souls of the people, there can be no question that his method of purification of the soul is the method that is approved by Allah and that is pleasing to Allah.

The path espoused by the Quran and sunnah is very clear and open for every human to follow. It basically is comprised of three components:

(1) The first step on the road to purification of the soul is to purify one's beliefs and heart from any form of *shirk* or associating partners with Allah. One's heart must possess the minimum of *tauheed* as described and discussed in the commentary to Hadith Number 2. Allah has said in the Quran,

يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓا۟ إِنَّمَا ٱلْمُشْرِكُونَ نَجَسٌ

"O believers! Verily, the polytheists are impure" (*al-Tauba* 28). This is a spiritual impurity— which is the opposite of purification of the soul— and not a physical impurity.

A hadith *qudsi* states,

أَنَا أَغْنَى الشُّرَكَاءِ عَنِ الشِّرْكِ مَنْ عَمِلَ عَمَلاً أَشْرَكَ فِيهِ مَعِي غَيْرِي تَرَكْتُهُ وَشِرْكَهُ

"I am the most self-sufficient and am in no need of having a partner. Whoever does a deed for My sake as well as for someone [or something] else will have that action rejected by Me with the one he associates [with Allah]." (Recorded by Muslim.)

This was the first step that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) took in purifying the souls of his Companions. Indeed, he was in Makkah for thirteen years virtually giving nothing but the message of *tauheed*. The heart must be purified first with *tauheed* before one can truly move on to anything else. If that is not done first, then all of the following steps will be in vain.

(2) The second obligatory step in purifying the soul and becoming beloved to Allah is the performance of the deeds that Allah has made obligatory upon the believers. (This goes hand in hand with the increase in *imaan* and *tauheed*.) This point is made very clearly in this hadith. Allah has said, "My servant does not draw near to Me with anything more loved by Me than the religious duties I have imposed upon him."

As has already been stated, these obligatory acts help purify the person and rectify his behavior. The five daily prayers, the fasting of the month of Ramadhaan and the giving of zakat, for example, all help in purifying the person. Remaining away from adultery, alcohol and interest— to remain away from such acts is obligatory— all are necessary steps to keep a person pure and reformed.

Al-Toofi stated,

> The order to perform the obligatory duties is a strict one. The one who does not perform them falls into punishment. On both of these matters, the case of the voluntary deeds is different. They are similar to the obligatory deeds in that in both of them one earns a reward. However, the obligatory deeds are more complete. For that reason, they are more beloved to Allah and take one closer to Him. The obligatory deeds are like the foundation while the voluntary deeds are like the branches and the building. If a person fulfills the obligatory deeds in the way that they are commanded to be fulfilled, with proper respect and esteem by submitting to Him and demonstrating the greatness of His Lordship and submission of His worship, one gets closer to Him in the greatest way.[1]

(3) The third step in the purification of one's soul is the performance of the voluntary deeds after one has attended to the deeds that are obligatory upon him. These deeds include all of the deeds that are not strictly obligated and which have some sign that they are praiseworthy acts. These deeds are also at different levels of virtue. Some virtuous deeds were greatly emphasized by the Prophet (peace be upon him) while others were not so emphasized. In other words, some voluntary deeds are much more virtuous than others. The more virtuous a voluntary deed, the closer it takes a person to Allah.

Fareed states that one can understand from this hadith that if a person is lacking in his performance of the obligatory deeds— in the sense that he does not perform them and is lackadaisical with respect to them[2]— but he performs many voluntary deeds, that will not lead him to becoming a beloved of Allah. One only comes closer to Allah by performing voluntary deeds after the person fulfills the obligatory deeds. This is the path of purification according to the *ahl al-Sunnah.*[3] In fact, as ibn Hubairah pointed out, something can only be "extra" if the necessary or obligatory portions are fulfilled.[1]

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[1] Quoted in Ahmad Fareed, *Al-Tazkiyah baina Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Soofiyah* (no publication information given), p. 22.

[2] This portion between the dashes is not from Ahmad Fareed but it must be added. This is because a person's shortcoming with respect to his obligatory deeds is made up by his voluntary deeds, unless, of course, he simply does not perform them or is not keen on performing them. Allah knows best.

[3] Fareed, *Tazkiyah*, p. 24.

The above is the correct path of purification and getting closer to Allah. If anyone follows a path other than that path— of obeying and submitting to Allah by performing the obligatory and voluntary deeds— he is simply deceiving himself. If he claims that he is getting closer to Allah by another path, his claim is no different from that of the polytheists who claimed that they were getting closer to Allah by worshipping their idols. Allah states their claim in the Quran,

أَلَا لِلَّهِ ٱلدِّينُ ٱلْخَالِصُ ۚ وَٱلَّذِينَ ٱتَّخَذُوا۟ مِن دُونِهِۦٓ أَوْلِيَآءَ مَا
نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُونَآ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ زُلْفَىٰٓ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ فِى مَا هُمْ فِيهِ
يَخْتَلِفُونَ ۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِى مَنْ هُوَ كَـٰذِبٌ كَفَّارٌ

"Surely, the religion (worship and obedience) is to Allah alone. And those who take protectors and helpers besides him [say,] 'We worship them only that they may bring us near to Allah.' Verily, Allah will judge between them concerning that wherein they differ. Truly, Allah guides not him who is a liar, and a disbeliever" (*al-Zumar* 3).

It is very important to note that this path is not a path that necessarily takes a long amount of time or requires that the person passes through certain stages. A person can become one of the *auliyaa* of Allah very quickly by sincerity and devotion to Allah. This true sincerity and devotion may come after he performs only a few deeds. Indeed, from the outset, he may perform those deeds that are obligatory upon him and he becomes beloved to Allah. Then he continues on that path, with Allah guiding him to what is good and proper. This will be a sign that he is continuing as one of Allah's *auliyaa*. This is part of the great mercy and blessings of Allah.[2]

The Goal of Purification According to the Quran and Sunnah

When a person is seeking a path of purification, it is important that he recognize what is the goal of his purification. An incorrect goal can be very dangerous to his process of purification.

The goal of Islamic purification is clear: the goal is to become as complete and truthful a servant of Allah that one can be. The goal of life is to worship and please Allah— and receive His pleasure in return. This is accomplished by strengthening one's faith and humbly submitting to Allah through the obligatory and voluntary deeds. This submission includes the outward submission as well as a submission of the acts of the heart.

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[1] Quoted in Fareed, *Tazkiyah*, p. 24.

[2] Cf., Hilaal, p. 149.

Allah has described the most noble of creation as His slaves and servants. This is the foremost praise that Allah has bestowed on any of the creation. Allah has said about the angels, for example,

وَلَهُۥ مَن فِى ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ ۚ وَمَنْ عِندَهُۥ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهِۦ وَلَا
يَسْتَحْسِرُونَ

"To Him belongs whosoever is in the heavens and on earth. And those who are near Him (the angels) are not too proud to worship Him, nor are they weary (of His worship)" (*al-Anbiyaa* 19). Allah also says,

لَّن يَسْتَنكِفَ ٱلْمَسِيحُ أَن يَكُونَ عَبْدًا لِّلَّهِ وَلَا ٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةُ ٱلْمُقَرَّبُونَ ۚ وَمَن
يَسْتَنكِفْ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهِۦ وَيَسْتَكْبِرْ فَسَيَحْشُرُهُمْ إِلَيْهِ جَمِيعًا

"The Messiah [Jesus] will never be so proud to reject being a slave to Allah, nor the angels who are near (to Allah). And whosoever rejects worshipping Him and is proud, then He will gather them all together unto Himself" (*al-Nisaa* 172).

Allah has described the Messenger of Allah Muhammad (peace be upon him) as His slave and servant in numerous places in the Quran. For example, Allah said,

سُبْحَٰنَ ٱلَّذِىٓ أَسْرَىٰ بِعَبْدِهِۦ لَيْلًا مِّنَ ٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْحَرَامِ إِلَى
ٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْأَقْصَا ٱلَّذِى بَٰرَكْنَا حَوْلَهُۥ لِنُرِيَهُۥ مِنْ ءَايَٰتِنَآ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ هُوَ
ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلْبَصِيرُ

"Exalted be He who took His slave [Muhammad (peace be upon him)] for a journey by night from *al-Masjid al-Haraam* (in Makkah) to the farthest mosque (in Jerusalem), the area of which We have blessed, in order that We might show him some of Our signs. Verily, He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer" (*al-Israa* 1).

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) was the most purified of mankind. He was the most complete servant and slave of Allah. Through his teachings, he also purified his noble Companions. In his teachings, the Creator and the creation always remained distinct. There was never any merging of the two of them. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) was always the slave and Allah was always the Lord. The two never became united into one. Such "unification" is not the purpose or goal of mankind. The purpose or goal, again, is to recognize Allah as the Lord and to worship Him alone. The goal is not to try to become Allah or try to become united with Allah.

The Path and Goal of Purification of the Sufis vis-a-vis the Way of the Sunnah

Before beginning this discourse an important point needs to be made. Like all heretical groups, not all Sufis are the same.[1] Indeed, not everyone who has a leaning toward Sufism is the same. Some are much more steeped in heretical beliefs and practices than others. The important point, though, is that once a person starts following a heresy or innovation, it becomes easier for him to start following a greater and worse heresy. This is a very dangerous path that can lead one to pure *kufr* and falling out of the fold of Islam.[2] The only real way to save oneself from such a danger is to avoid all heresies and innovations, no matter how "small" they seem to be.

Historically and contemporarily speaking, it has been the Sufis who claim to follow the path of purification.[3] Non-Sufis may have studied law, hadith and so forth, but they, they claim, have concentrated on purifying the hearts and bringing people closer to Allah. This claim of theirs, though, needs to be studied. This hadith, in particular, is one of the main sources by which their claim may be evaluated in that this hadith is showing the path that one must follow in order to become beloved to Allah.

The next obvious question then is: What is the path of purification that is prescribed by the Sufis and how does that differ, if at all, from the way taught by the Quran and the sunnah?[4]

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[1] Mahmood Al-Qaasim has convincingly argued that all Sufi groups have, in essence, the same beliefs and the same goals. [See Mahmood al-Qaasim, *Al-Kashf an Haqeeqah al-Soofiyah li-Awal Marrah fi al-Tareekh* (Amman, Jordan: al-Maktabah al-Islaamiyah, 1413 A.H.), pp. 9-308.] However, even if that is the case, it does not mean that everyone who is influenced by Sufism is knowledgeable of the actual teachings and goal of the Sufi group that he is in contact with.

[2] One of the ways of Satan is to lead people into greater and greater sins. What starts out as something small is made bigger and bigger over time. For more on this point and its relation to innovations, see Saeed al-Ghaamdi, *Haqeeqat al-Bidah wa Ahkaamuhu* (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Rushd, 1992), vol. 1, pp. 79-86.

[3] Al-Ghazzaali once wrote, "I learnt with certainty that it is above all the mystics [Sufis] who walk on the road of God; their life is the best life, their method the soundest method, their character the purest character; indeed, were the intellect of the intellectuals and the learning of the learned and the scholarship of the scholars, who are versed in the profundities of revealed truth, brought together in the attempt to improve the life and character of the mystics, they would find no way of doing so; for to the mystics all movement and all rest, whether external or internal, brings illumination from the light of the lamp of prophetic revelation." [Taken from the translation of al-Ghazaali's *al-Munqadh min al-Dhilaal* in W. Montgomery Watt, *The Faith of Practice of al-Ghazali* (Chicago: Kazi Publications, 1982), p. 60.] Al-Ghazzaali's claim that their path is "from the light of the lamp of prophetic revelation" is, at the least, to be questioned, if not denied outright, as shall be demonstrated in the text.

[4] Due to space limitations, this topic cannot be dealt with in great detail. However, the interested reader may consult the different sources that are quoted throughout this section.

The path to become a *wali* of Allah is a lengthy and arduous journey for the Sufis. A person must pass from state to state. He must exert himself and go through specific spiritual exercises and routines before he can get to the exalted state of being a Sufi *wali.*

That path starts with fulfilling obligatory deeds. However, in the second level, when the "student" moves on, al-Ghazzaali recommends that he only perform the obligatory deeds and not perform the voluntary deeds as there are more important matters to tend to.[1]

Their path also entails many aspects that are not to be found in the Quran and sunnah. These include a type of *zuhd* (renunciation of the world) that is not found in the Quran or sunnah.[2] One is also expected to practice a kind of monasticism where one retires from the relations of this world, even if one has a wife and children.[3] Then they also have their own special forms of *dhikr*[4] and rhythmic chanting[5], listening to songs and music as well as dancing.[1] After all of these, one finally "witnesses" Allah. This, for them, is the essence of being a *wali.*[2]

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[1] Abu Haamid Muhammad al-Ghazzaali, *Ihyaa Uloom al-Deen* (Beirut: Daar al-Marifah, n.d.), vol. 2, pp. 19-20.

[2] For example, Sahl ibn Abdullah al-Tustari favored near starvation as a part of *zuhd*. He even was opposed to those who ate only with the intention of making themselves strong enough to perform the obligatory deeds. He stated that not being able to perform the obligatory deeds because one has not eaten enough is better than being able to perform the deeds with a full stomach. He argued that the prayer of a near starving person made sitting is better than the prayer performed standing. Ibn al-Jauzi responds by saying that when one eats to make oneself strong enough to perform the obligatory deeds, that act of eating is a form of worship in itself. See Abdul Rahmaan ibn al-Jauzi, *Talbees Iblees* (Beirut: Daar al-Qalam, n.d.), p. 204; Hilaal, pp. 154-155; Fareed, *Tazkiyyah*, pp. 37-41. Furthermore, although it is confirmed that the Prophet (peace be upon him) ate meat and did not say that it was spiritually harmful, some Sufis stated, "Eating just a quarter's amount of meat deadens the heart for forty days." Quoted in ibn al-Jauzi, p. 203; Hilaal, p. 156.

[3] This retirement and monasticism is considered a must at the beginning of the rites of passage. (See Hilaal, p. 157.) Al-Qushairi said, "The servant cannot completely get close to Allah unless he gets away from the creation." [See Abdul Kareem al-Qushairi, *Al-Risaalah al-Qushairiyyah* (Muhammad Ali Sabeeh, 1957), p. 42.] On the other hand, al-Shaukaani pointed out that if he interacts with the people in the proper way (such as teaching them or ordering good and eradicating evil), he gets closer to Allah by his interaction with the creation. (See al-Shaukaani, *Qatr*, pp. 417-418.)

[4] A common form of their *dhikr* is simply to repeat Allah's name over and over again or simply to say, "He, He," over and over again. This is not the type of *dhikr* that was taught by the Prophet (peace be upon him). Every expression of *dhikr* taught by the Prophet (peace be upon him) was a complete sentence with an understandable meaning. For example, one repeats, "Allah is greatest," "All praise be to Allah," "There is none worthy of worship except Allah" and so forth. See Fareed, *Tazkiyyah*, pp. 35-37.

[5] Much of their *dhikr* is more akin to chanting than it is to *dhikr*. Al-Sahuwaardi said, "Our purpose is not to make mention of Allah but to make all of the heart concentrate on one matter in order for it to be ready for what appears to it." (Quoted in Hilaal, p. 173.) Ibn Taimiya also quotes a similar passage from one of them who also said that it makes no difference what the person is chanting at that time, whether it be the name of Allah or even some idol. (Quoted in Hilaal, p. 173.) For more about their *dhikr*, see M. al-Qaasim, pp. 338-341.

This is the path that al-Ghazzaali claimed no one could ever improve upon. In reality, it is a heretical path that is not related to the way of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Therefore, it will not lead to one becoming a beloved of Allah or a true *wali* as has been expressed in this hadith.

As mentioned earlier, the goal of *tazkiyyah* (purification) according to the Quran and sunnah is to become as complete a servant of Allah as one can be. The goal of *tazkiyyah* among the Sufis is completely different. It is not the worship of Allah that is their goal. Instead, it is either the witnessing of Allah in this life, getting knowledge directly from Allah (which makes them no longer in need of the Quran and sunnah[3]), the supposed temporary unification with Allah or the complete loss of one's humanity in the realization that everything is Allah.[4]

For example, the widely accepted Abu Haamid al-Ghazzaali wrote that *al-mukaashifah* ("unveiling" of Allah) refers to "a light that appears in the heart when it is purified and cleansed of all base qualities." Hence, it is a result and goal of the process of *tazkiyyah* according to the Sufi al-Ghazzaali. He then says that this light opens to the person many realities, including all of Allah's attributes and qualities. This light gives the person the knowledge of prophecy and how the angel brought the revelation to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). All of the dominions of the heavens and the earth will become clear and exposed to the person who has experienced this unveiling.[5]

If a person's goal is simply to witness the reality of Allah or to realize that everything is actually only Allah, once he has achieved that goal, what is the purpose of continuing to perform deeds or acts of worship of Allah? Many Sufis themselves answered this question. They claimed that they were no longer obliged to pray or perform any of the acts of worship because they had already reached their goal. Furthermore, all the forbidden becomes permissible because the purpose of the forbidden is to help the person reach his goal.[1]

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[1] Like many modern-day Christians, Sufis considered singing and dancing as a way of getting closer to Allah. These actions stir the emotions, which they claim is simply another way of expressing one's love for God. In fact, for many of them, listening to the Quran does not have as much effect on them as the music and singing that they prefer. See Hilaal, pp. 161-166; Fareed, *Tazkiyyah*, pp. 32-35,

[2] Cf., Hilaal, pp. 149-181.

[3] The early Sufi Abu Yazeed al-Bustaami said, "Those poor people [referring to the scholars of hadith, fiqh, tafseer and so forth]. They take their knowledge from the dead on the authority of the dead while we take our knowledge directly from the Living who does not die." (Quoted in ibn al-Jauzi, p. 320.) The knowledge from the "dead on the authority of the dead" is the knowledge of the Quran, hadith and fiqh that has been passed on from the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his Companions. That type of knowledge is not what those people are interested in.

[4] This last concept is known as *wahdat al-wujood* (pantheism or monism). It is believed in by a number of Sufis, especially the more extreme among them. It is a *kufr* that is worse than the *kufr* of the Christians. The Christians claimed that Jesus and God form one unity while these Sufis claim that all of creation is nothing but Allah Himself. For more on this concept, see Mahmood al-Qaasim, pp. 105-262 and 703-712.

[5] See Abu Haamid Muhammad al-Ghazzaali, *Ihyaa Uloom al-Deen* (Beirut: Daar al-Marifah, n.d), vol. 1, pp. 19-20.

For the pantheistic Sufis, the question then becomes: When a person comes to the realization that everything is Allah, what is the purpose of good deeds or acts of worship? Everything is Allah and Allah is entirely perfect and good. There is then no such thing as evil or sin. Hence, ibn Arabi[2], one of the most extreme of the pantheists and monists, once said in well-known lines of poetry,

"The Lord is reality and the slave is [the same] reality
Woe to me, then who is the one who is
responsible for doing deeds?
If you say, 'The slave,' but he is the Lord
And if you say, 'The Lord,' then who can burden
him with responsibility?"[3]

Ibn Taimiya wrote,

> The knowledgeable *shaikh* Kamaal al-Deen al-Maraaghi, the *shaikh* of his time, narrated to me, when he came and it reached him what [the Sufis] say about *tauheed*: I read some of what they say of al-Afeef al-Tilimisaani [the leading Sufi of his time] and I found him in contradiction with the Quran and sunnah. When I mentioned that to him, he said, "The Quran does not contain *tauheed*. In fact, all of it is *shirk*. Whoever follows the Quran will not achieve *tauheed*." I said to him, "In your people's opinion, what is the difference between [having

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[1] For comments from Sufis on that matter, see ibn Taimiya, *Majmoo*, vol. 11, p. 403.

[2] Muhiyy al-Deen Ibn Arabi (560-638 A.H.) is a rather controversial figure in Islam. Many authors like to refer to him as, "the greatest Shaikh". Like the lines of poetry upcoming in the text, his words are filled with clear and blatant *kufr* (blasphemies). Some people claim that he was writing at an esoteric level that only those who are deeply ingrained in the Sufi tradition can understand. If, as these people claim, ibn Arabi was presenting the same truths that are clearly and understandably presented in the Quran, hadith, statements of the Companions and thousands of scholars, there was no need for him to resort to such esoteric and confusing language. The Prophet (peace be upon him) and his Companions never spoke words that were clearly *kufr* while apparently having some hidden meaning to them. Again, if he were supposedly presenting those same Islamic truths, he should be considered a poor writer who had no conception of how to present his material in a clear fashion while the Quran and the Prophet (peace be upon him) were able to present such information clearly. However, if ibn Arabi was teaching ideas that contradict the Quran and sunnah— which was more likely the case as it is very difficult to try to reconcile his writings with the Quran and sunnah—- then his writings should be condemned for the pure *kufr* and blasphemies they contain. This much more logical approach has been the approach of many great scholars throughout the history of Islam. One could consult numerous works for further information about ibn Arabi including: Burhaan al-Deen al-Buqaaee, *Masra al-Tasawwuf au Tanbeeh al-Ghabi ila Takfeer ibn Arabi* (Daar al-Taqwa, n.d.), *passim*; Kamaal Isa, *Nadharaat fi Mutaqidaat ibn Arabi* (Jeddah: Daar al-Mujtama, 1986), *passim*; Abdul Qaadir al-Sanadi, *Kitaab ibn Arabi al-Soofi fi Meezaan al-Bahth wa al-Tahqeeq* (Buraida, Saudi Arabia: Daar al-Bukhaari, 1991), vol. 2, *passim*; Kamaal Aoon, *Kitaab al-Fatoohaat al-Makkiyyah wa ma Waraahu min Ayaad Khafiyyah* (Tanta, Egypt: Daar al-Basheer, 1989), *passim*.

[3] Quoted in Fareed, p. 50.

> sexual intercourse with] a wife, a non-related woman and a sister. Or are they all the same?" He said, "The people who are veiled [from the truth] believe that they are forbidden [that is, to have sexual intercourse with a non-related woman or one's sister]. They are forbidden for them. But for us, they are not forbidden."[1]

These errant results are all the byproduct of an errant path and an errant goal of purification. After making some of the above points, Fareed concluded,

> We have presented this clear *kufr*— and quoting *kufr* is not in itself *kufr*— so that it may be made clear to our brethren how innovated methodologies take their followers away and where the path of misguidance leads its adherents. [We also presented it] to demonstrate the purity of the way of the *salaf* and how their path is the path of safety and success in this life as it is also the path to Paradise, for it is the path of the prophets and those who followed in their footsteps.[2]

This Hadith Does not Lend Support to the Sufi Concepts of *Hulool* or *Ittihaad*

Unfortunately, this hadith is sometimes used to prove a belief that is clear *kufr* (blasphemy) or heresy. Some Sufis try to use this hadith as evidence for their concepts of *fanaa* (فناء "annihilation and loss of oneself in God"), *hulool* (حلول "incarnation in God") and *ittihaad* (اتحاد "union with Allah").[3] They argue that this hadith states that Allah is becoming one's vision, hearing and so forth. Hence, the person must be becoming one with Allah.[4] Through "spiritual exercises" and grace from Allah, a *wali* becomes one with Allah.

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[1] Ibn Taimiya, *Majmoo*, vol. 2, pp. 244-245. Ibn Taimiya then goes on to refute such blasphemous beliefs.

[2] Fareed, p. 51.

[3] Al-Qushairi is one Sufi who made such a claim. See al-Qushairi, (Sabeeh) p. 148. Also see ibn Hajr, *Fath* (al-Maktaba al-Tijaariyyah), vol. 13, pp. 136-7 for more of the Sufi arguments and a reply to them. The claim that this hadith supports such concepts has also been rejected outright by al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 272; al-Mudaabaghi, p. 272; al-Sindi, *Sharh*, p. 115 and others. The concepts mentioned above are discussed by the author in more detail in, "Ibn Taimiya: *Mujahid*, *Mujtahid* and *Mujaddid*, (IV)" *Al-Basheer* (Vol. 4, No. 2, July-August 1990), pp. 21-24.

[4] One must be careful how one writes about such hadith, as some statements can easily be misinterpreted. For example, while commenting on this hadith, Abbasi wrote, "When a stage of complete identification is reached, the man is exalted and becomes one with his Lord then Allah becomes his sight, his hearing and his limbs. This was demonstrated when the Companions of the Prophet took an oath to stand fast with him, 'Those who swear allegiance to thee do but swear allegiance to Allah. The hand of Allah is above their hands.'" [Muhammad Yusuf Abbasi, *Forty Gems: Al-Arba'in* (Lahore: Islamic Publications Limited, 1986), p. 207.] The first portion of the quote could easily be misunderstood as implying *hulool* or *ittihaad*. However, the example that he gives seems to make it clear that such is not what he was implying. Allah knows best.

Although this thought is quite common among Sufis, it clearly goes against the teachings of the Quran and sunnah.[1]

In reality, this hadith is an argument against them. The hadith makes a clear distinction between the Creator Allah and the created *wali*. At the beginning, Allah makes it clear that there are people who may oppose His *auliyaa*. Those *auliyaa* are different from Allah. Hence, there is the existence of the Protector and those He protects.

The remainder of the hadith states, "Were he to ask [something] of Me, I would surely give it to him; and were he to ask Me for refuge, I would surely grant him it..." If the person becomes one with Allah or Allah transforms Himself into the person, how is that the human is still asking of Allah and seeking refuge in Him? Furthermore, who is it that Allah does not want to harm by taking his soul at death? It is not Allah but it is the human who is separate and distinct from the Creator.

This demonstrates that no matter how pious a *wali* becomes, he will always be dependent upon Allah. He will still have to turn to Allah for help and will still have to seek refuge in Allah. He will not have some superhuman powers that, by his own will and power, he can do what he wishes. Instead, still, nothing good or bad can occur to him except by the will of Allah. However, he will be blessed by the fact that he is close to Allah and, hence, Allah will protect him and help him when he needs Allah's help and protection.

"Were he to ask [something] of Me, I would surely give it to him; and were he to ask Me for refuge, I would surely grant him it."

Obviously Allah is able to give the slave whatever he desires without any need for the slave to ask for it. But by being asked and granting, Allah becomes even more beloved to the slave and this moves the slave that much closer to Allah.

This hadith proves that the person who performs the obligatory and voluntary deeds and remains away from the forbidden and disliked deeds will be honored with a special place with respect to Allah. Allah's love will cover him so much that if he asks anything, Allah will surely grant it to His beloved slave.[2] Similarly, if the slave seeks refuge in Allah, Allah will give him refuge and respite. The Prophet (peace be upon him) emphasized this point when he said,

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[1] For more on the concept of *hulool*, see Abdul Khaaliq, *Al-Fikr al-Soofi*, pp. 65-68. He begins his discussion (p. 65) by saying, "Since seeking paradise and escaping from Hell is not a goal according to the Sufis, in fact that is the goal of the commoners and ignorant according to them, the Sufis created their own different goals other than that. [Their goal] is for everyone of them to become a god and lord, knowing all of the Unseen in the same way that Allah knows it and to manage the affairs of all of this creation in the same way that Allah manages such affairs, giving life and death... The goal of the Sufi was to reach the level of Prophethood first and then they ascended until one of their members, they claim, reached the level of Godship and Lordship."

[2] A number of stories of pious souls' supplications being answered could be recorded here but there is no need for that. The interested reader may consult ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, pp. 348-356; al-Laalakai, vol. 9, *passim*.

إِنَّ مِنْ عِبَادِ اللَّهِ مَنْ لَوْ أَقْسَمَ عَلَى اللَّهِ لأَبَرَّهُ

"There are from the slaves of Allah people who, if they were to make an oath upon Allah, He would certainly fulfill it." (Recorded by al-Bukhari.)

In many cases, the pious prefer to bear patiently the afflictions of this world and hope that by doing so they will receive their rewards from Allah. Such was the case with the Companion Saad ibn Abu Waqqaas who had lost his sight and was told by his friends that he should ask Allah to return his sight. His reply to them was, "The decree of Allah is more beloved to me than my eyesight."

Some of the early scholars stated that Allah knows what is in the best interest of His slaves. Sometimes a believer will ask for something while Allah knows that what he asks for is not the best for him. Therefore, Allah does not answer that supplication but instead gives him something that is better than that in both this life and the Hereafter. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated,

مَا مِنْ مُسْلِمٍ يَدْعُو بِدَعْوَةٍ لَيْسَ فِيهَا إِثْمٌ وَلاَ قَطِيعَةُ رَحِمٍ إِلاَّ أَعْطَاهُ اللَّهُ بِهَا إِحْدَى ثَلاَثٍ إِمَّا أَنْ تُعَجَّلَ لَهُ دَعْوَتُهُ وَإِمَّا أَنْ يَدَّخِرَهَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَإِمَّا أَنْ يَصْرِفَ عَنْهُ مِنَ السُّوءِ مِثْلَهَا

"There is no Muslim who supplicates Allah with a supplication that does not contain anything sinful or asks for the ties of kinship to be broken save that Allah gives him one of three things: either He will give him what he asks for soon, or He will delay it for him for the Hereafter or He will keep a similar evil away from him."[1]

Furthermore, one should not be confused by the fact that many pious people might supplicate to Allah and their prayers are not answered. According to al-Shaukaani, this hadith is talking about the *auliyaa* of Allah and this is one the highest level one can achieve. There are many levels of piety and goodness. Those of lower levels may not be granted the same blessings as the *auliyaa* mentioned in this hadith.[2]

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[1] Recorded by Ahmad, Abu Yala, al-Haakim and others. According to al-Shaukaani (*Qatr*, p. 441), its chain is good. Al-Haithami stated that the chain of Ahmad, Abu Yala and one chain of al-Bazzaar contains narrators of the two *Sahih*s of al-Bukhari and Muslim, save for Ali ibn Ali al-Rifaai who is, though, a trustworthy narrator. Al-Haakim called the hadith *sahih* and al-Dhahabi approved of his conclusion. See al-Banna, vol. 14, p. 266.

[2] Al-Shaukaani, *Qatr*, p. 482.

What is the Benefit of Asking Allah

Al-Shaukaani poses the following question: What is the point of actually asking Allah for something or seeking refuge in Him when He already knows what is in the soul of the person and He can fulfill those needs without the person resorting to such asking, especially those who are His *auliyaa* and who have a special relationship with Him? Al-Shaukaani offers the following points in response to this question:

First, when Allah gives after the person has asked, the person realizes that it is Allah who has responded to his supplication. This realization and lofty experience— that Allah has responded to his prayers— brings him a greater joy than the joy that came from what Allah gave him. This encourages him to do even more good deeds as he now realizes how Allah responds to him when he gets closer to Allah.

Second, supplication is one of the greatest forms of worship, as was discussed earlier in this work. Hence, all the benefits of such prayers would be lost to the person if Allah would give him before he even supplicates to Allah.

Third, the *wali* will be freeing himself from the arrogance of not praying to Allah. Allah has said in the Quran,

إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِى سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ

"Verily, those who scorn My worship will surely enter Hell in humiliation" (*Ghaafir* 60). According to the scholars of Quranic interpretation, "My worship" here is in reference to supplicating to Allah.

Fourth, supplications are one of the "causes" that lead to certain effects in this world. If the person does not follow such a cause, he will not be granted the desired result.[1]

"And I do not hesitate to do anything as I hesitate to take the soul of the believer, for he hates death and I hate to harm him."

Allah has decreed death for every individual. Allah says in the Quran,

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَآئِقَةُ ٱلْمَوْتِ

"Every soul shall taste death" (*ali-Imraan* 185). Death is when the soul actually leaves the body. According to ibn Rajab, "This only occurs with greatly intense pain. It is the greatest pain that afflicts the slave in this world."[2] This hadith demonstrates that a person may be one of Allah's *auliyaa* yet, at the same time, he still hates and fears death. This hatred of death, in itself, does not remove him from being a *wali*.

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[1] Cf., al-Shaukaani, *Qatr*, pp. 480-481.

[2] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 356.

Note that this is the real death of a human, where the soul is taken by the angels from the physical body of the person. This is not to be confused with the near-death experiences that many people talk about today. Such people who supposedly have "come back from the dead" were not dead at all. And, most likely, the visions that they saw in their "death" states— that of the white light at the end of a tunnel, the feeling of tranquillity— are nothing but tricks from Satan to convince the person that he is living a good life and that he has nothing to fear when death actually comes to him.

Some members of the early generations of Muslims preferred to strive their best at the time of death. Umar ibn Abdul Aziz said, "I do not wish for the harshness of death to be made easy for me. It is the last act for the believer by which [sins] may be obliterated."[1]

Others feared that final test and they prayed to Allah to make it easy for them. And if Allah wills for death to be easy for a slave, He makes it so.

Al-Shaukaani points out that the hatred for death could be for a number of reasons and none of the reasons must necessarily be excluded from the implication of this hadith. One may hate death due to the hardships that usually precede death. One may also hate death because it implies parting from one's beloved, family, wealth and friends whom one loves for the sake of Allah.[2]

The hatred for death alluded to in this hadith may also refer to the fear that every believer should have toward Allah. He should fear that he did not please Allah in this world and that Allah will hold him accountable for even the smallest sins that he committed in this world. He may fear because he is not satisfied with the deeds he performed or with the repentance he made from some deeds. These kinds of fear are in the heart of every believer. But when the actual time of death comes, the believer will be given the glad tidings of what is to come and his situation will change. He will then look forward to what is to come to him and his fear will be turned into tranquillity by the descending angels.

In the two *Sahi*hs, it is recorded that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

وَلَكِنَّ الْمُؤْمِنَ إِذَا حَضَرَهُ الْمَوْتُ بُشِّرَ بِرِضْوَانِ اللَّهِ وَكَرَامَتِهِ فَلَيْسَ شَيْءٌ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْهِ مِمَّا
أَمَامَهُ فَأَحَبَّ لِقَاءَ اللَّهِ وَأَحَبَّ اللَّهُ لِقَاءَهُ

"When the believer reaches the time of death, he is given the glad tidings of pleasure and honor from Allah. Then there is nothing more beloved to him that what is in front of him. He loves [then] to meet Allah and Allah loves to meet him." Muhammad ibn Kaab said, "The angel of death says to the one who is to die, 'Peace be upon you, O devoted slave of Allah. Allah sends you greetings of peace.'" Then he read the following verse of the Quran,

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[1] Quoted in ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 357.
[2] Al-Shaukaani, *Qatr*, p. 518.

ٱلَّذِينَ تَتَوَفَّىٰهُمُ ٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةُ طَيِّبِينَ ۙ يَقُولُونَ سَلَٰمٌ عَلَيْكُمُ ٱدْخُلُوا۟ ٱلْجَنَّةَ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

"Those [believers] whom the angels cause to die. They say: Peace be unto you. Enter the Garden because of what you used to do" (*al-Nahl* 32).[1]

What is the Meaning of Allah Hesitating?

Hesitation, in general, implies that one is not sure about the deed that he is about to perform. This uncertainty gives rise to hesitance. Allah, though, has knowledge of all things and there seems to be no need for Allah ever to hesitate in any act that He does. Therefore, what is meant by Allah hesitating in this hadith?

Once again, this question has been responded to in a number of ways. Ibn Hajr presents four explanations.[2] This author knows of at least eight explanations. These include:

(1) A person may be about to die due to an illness that he has. However, he supplicates to Allah and Allah removes that disease and hardship from him. This action is like a "hesitation" in that the deed was about to take place but then Allah decreed not to have that deed take place. However, when the person's time is due, he will then pass away without any delay.[3]

(2) A second interpretation is that Allah is saying, "I never send My messenger over and over like I do when I send him to one of My believing servants." Some say that the hesitation is on the part of the angel while Allah ascribes it to Himself. Some argue that the angel has mercy upon the slave and his attachment to this world. However, when he remembers Allah's command, he fulfills the command. This hesitation out of mercy for the human is what is being referred to in this hadith. This interpretation, though, distorts the meaning of the words itself and implies a completely different meaning. Furthermore, there is no hesitation on the part of the angel because he does actually take the soul at its destined time.[4]

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[1] Quoted in ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 358.

[2] Ibn Hajr, *Fath* (al-Maktaba al-Tijaariyyah), vol. 13, pp. 148-149.

[3] Al-Shaukaani's conclusions on this matter shall be stated shortly. However, he (*Qatr*, p. 489) states that the disease and the cure do not imply any kind of "hesitation" on the part of Allah. Hence, he rejects this interpretation outright. However, if one sees that the cure was due to the supplication of the person himself, this interpretation must be considered a part of what al-Shaukaani himself concludes.

[4] Cf., al-Shaukaani, *Qatr*, p. 490, p. 493 and p. 494.

(3) Since death comes with such harshness and since it is a must for every human, Allah hates to harm and hurt the believer and therefore He calls his act "hesitation" on His part with respect to the believers.

(4) This hadith is addressed to humans and put in a fashion that they would understand. Ibn Hajr states, for example, when a father wants to hit his son to keep him from some wrongdoing, his compassion for his son makes him hesitate just a little. However, when he remembers the overall need of what he is going to do, he goes ahead and hits his child. Allah has expressed taking his *wali*'s soul in this fashion so that its meaning could be clear to everyone: Although Allah does not wish to harm His *wali*, the overall good of taking His *wali*'s soul must take precedence. Therefore, He causes His *wali* to die.

(5) Ibn Hajr quotes al-Karamaani as stating that this hadith implies that Allah takes the soul of the *wali* slowly, softly and in stages, as opposed to how the soul of other humans are taken. This is what is meant by the "hesitation" on the part of Allah and the act is referred as "hesitation" in order to stress this aspect of it.

(6) Ibn al-Salaah stated that the meaning is not that Allah hesitates at all. Instead, Allah takes the soul of the believer in a way that is similar to one who is hesitating when he is doing something that he dislikes. Because Allah loves the slave, He does not want to do anything to harm him but Allah knows that this matter must be fulfilled. However, this hadith makes it clear that Allah does not take the soul of a *wali* in order to disgrace the *wali*. Instead, He takes his soul in order to elevate the person and move him to a life which will be much greater and more pleasing to him.[1]

(7) Ibn Taimiya has offered the following explanation: When the servant becomes beloved to Allah, Allah fulfills his wants and needs, since he loves what Allah loves and hates what Allah hates. Therefore, Allah hates to harm this beloved of His. However, Allah has decreed that all souls must face death. This decree is also what Allah wants and it is something good. So Allah wants him to die, according to what He has decreed, yet He does not want to harm His servant through death. In one sense, then, death is desirable and, in another sense, it is undesirable. This is the reality of this "hesitation". When something is wanted due to one reason and, at the same time, not wanted due to another, it is something about which one would hesitate.[2]

(8) Al-Shaukaani takes a very different approach in interpreting this portion of the hadith. He begins by stating some important premises. He says that the "hesitation" must be of some benefit to the *wali*. This is because the

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[1] Quoted in al-Bugha and Mistu, pp. 326-327.

[2] Ibn Taimiya is quoted in Usaamah Hamzah's footnotes to Ahmad ibn Taimiya, *Al-Soofiyyah wa al-Fuqaraa* (Cairo: Daar al-Fath, 1984), pp. 35-36. Hamzah stated that this quote came from ibn Taimiya's work, *al-Risaalah al-Muduniyyah*. However, this author could not find it in the edition of that *Risaalah* available to him (which is different from the edition referred to by Hamzah). However, the author did find a very similar passage from ibn Taimiya in Muhammad Rashaad Saalim, ed., *Jaami al-Rasaail l-ibn Taimiya* (Cairo: Matbaah al-Madani, 1984), vol. 2, p. 107.

hadith is a type of encouragement for people to reach the status of being a *wali* of Allah. If the *wali*'s death is no different from any other servant, then there would be nothing special concerning the *wali.*[1]

He also states that all scholars recognize that nothing occurs but by the will of Allah. However, he argues, that they neglect the fact that Allah is able to do everything that He wills and there is nothing constraining Him. He may even change what He has decreed from one thing to another— although all of that was within His knowledge and His preordainment. He knew that certain causes would occur. This is why one's supplications and prayers have some effect. Allah changes the decree because of one's supplications. If there were no effect to prayers, and a person only received what is decreed, this would imply that Allah does not actually respond to the supplication. That conclusion contradicts what is stated in this hadith, "Were he to ask of Me, I would surely give it to him." Indeed, there is a hadith of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) that states,

لاَ يَرُدُّ الْقَضَاءَ إِلاَّ الدُّعَاءُ وَلاَ يَزِيدُ فِي الْعُمْرِ إِلاَّ الْبِرُّ

"Nothing repels the Decree except supplications and nothing increases one's lifetime except righteousness."[2] The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) used to seek refuge in Allah from an evil decree. (Recorded by al-Bukhari.)

Allah says in the Quran,

يَمۡحُواْ ٱللَّهُ مَا يَشَآءُ وَيُثۡبِتُۖ وَعِندَهُۥٓ أُمُّ ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ

"Allah blots out what He wills and confirms [what He wills]. And with Him is the preserved tablet" (*al-Rad* 39). This means that Allah erases or confirms whatever He wills of what has been decreed— although all of that is according to His pre-knowledge and what He has already recorded in the Preserved Tablet. Thus, Allah may confirm or change a person's life-span, sustenance and so forth. Allah also says,

وَمَا يُعَمَّرُ مِن مُّعَمَّرٖ وَلَا يُنقَصُ مِنۡ عُمُرِهِۦٓ إِلَّا فِي كِتَٰبٍۚ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ

يَسِيرٞ

"And no aged man is granted a length of life, nor is a part cut off from his life, but it is in a Book. Surely, that is easy for Allah" (*Faatir* 11). This means there can be a change in a person's life-span but that change has already been recorded in the Preserved Tablet. Allah also says,

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[1] Al-Shaukaani, *Qatr*, p. 495.

[2] The last part of this hadith is also interpreted as meaning, "keeping good relations with relatives," instead of "righteousness". Recorded by al-Tirmidhi. According to al-Albaani, it is *hasan*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 1271.

هُوَ ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَكُم مِّن طِينٍ ثُمَّ قَضَىٰٓ أَجَلًا ۖ وَأَجَلٌ مُّسَمًّى عِندَهُۥ ۖ

"He it is who created you from clay, and then has decreed a stated term. And there is with Him another determined term" (*al-Anaam* 2). This means that a person has two life-spans and Allah decrees and fulfills whichever He wills.[1]

Then al-Shaukaani states that when "a person's time comes," there will be no advance or delay with respect to that time. However, before that time actually comes, it is permissible for Allah to delay or change that time due to a person's prayer or righteous deeds. Similarly, He may advance that time due to some evil the person did, such as cutting off relations with relatives and so forth. The hadith that mention the fulfillment of a decree should be understood to imply that the person did not do anything special to delay that decree. The hadith that imply a change in a decree refer to cases where the person has done some act to change that decree. This is the only way to reconcile such apparently conflicting hadith.

After these premises, al-Shaukaani returns to the hadith. He states that the "hesitation" is expressing Allah's love for His servant doing some deed that will delay his death. Allah is giving him a chance to supplicate or do some other deed that will prolong his life. If the slave does not do any such act and his time comes, Allah will then take his soul without any delay. So the "hesitation" is Allah waiting for the person to do some deed that will be a cause for Allah changing the decree and prolonging his life. (However, Allah did know beforehand whether the person would do such an act or not.) Al-Shaukaani states that this interpretation does not imply anything unacceptable of Allah nor does it contradict any other text.[2]

Although al-Shaukaani took some twenty pages to completely present his argument, for his argument to be truly convincing, he would need stronger evidence to tie it directly to what is stated in this hadith.

In conclusion, it is difficult to determine what is meant by Allah's hesitation in this hadith. It is clear that Allah "hesitates" but none of the explanations offered by the scholars seems convincing enough to consider it definitely the correct and proper interpretation. Allah knows best.

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[1] It should be noted that the interpretation that al-Shaukaani gives for this verse goes against what is commonly accepted as the correct interpretation. For example, it has been narrated from ibn Abbaas and numerous others that the second "determined term" is in relation to the resurrection or life in the Hereafter. Cf., ibn Katheer, *Tafseer*, vol. 2, p. 139. In al-Shaukaani's own commentary on the Quran, he mentions the interpretation mentioned above in the text but he does not ascribe it to anyone. See Muhammad ibn Ali al-Shaukaani, *Fath al-Qadeer* (Cairo: Mustafa al-Baba al-Halabi, 1964), vol. 2, p. 99.

[2] Al-Shaukaani, *Qatr*, pp. 496-516.

Other Points Related to This Hadith

- Whoever opposes the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is actually opposing the *auliyaa* of Allah. This is a point that many heretical groups, including but not restricted to the Shiah, have neglected. It is clear from the Quran and hadith that the Companions were people of *imaan* and *taqwa*. If a person opposes them, then Allah is declaring war upon him.[1]
- It was stated earlier that it is not possible to identify one of Allah's *auliyaa* with certainty. If that is the case, how is that one must avoid having mutual animosity toward them when a *wali* cannot truly be identified in the first place? The key here is that the animosity is based on the person's obedience to Allah and following the way of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Hence, the solution is that a Muslim should never oppose any other Muslim for something that he is doing in application of the Quran and sunnah. If he dislikes him for anything of that nature, then he is disliking him for his obedience to Allah and then the threat of this hadith may apply to him.
- This hadith shows the great status of one of Allah's *auliyaa*. The *wali* moves from his own planning and management to the guidance of Allah, from his helping himself to Allah's help and from his ability to Allah's power and ability.[2]
- Ibn Taimiya wrote the following important points concerning Allah's *auliyaa*,

> The *auliyaa* of Allah have no visible signs that distinguish them from others. It is not necessary that they wear a particular dress or shun some clothing that is permissible. They do not necessarily have to shave their heads, cut their hair short or clip it, as long as it is within the permissible limits. There is a saying that states that there are many pious men in plain clothing and many heretics in religious garb. The *auliyaa* of Allah may come from any sector of the *ummah* of Muhammad. What is required to be from them is that one stays away from every doctrine which is unjustified and eschew any practice which is immoral. They may be scholars of the Quran, masters of knowledge, men of the sword and jihad, traders, craftsmen, industrialists, farmers and so forth. Allah has mentioned different groups of them in the verse, "Verily, your Lord

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[1] Al-Shaukaani (*Qatr*, p. 305) points out that the source of the enmity between the Shiah and the Companions is the fact the Companions preserved the sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him). The hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) provide some of the strongest arguments against the claims of the Shiah and other heretical groups. Therefore, if the credibility of the Companions can be put in doubt— as both the Shiah and the Orientalists have tried to do in vain— the entire structure of the sunnah can be destroyed and the door would be wide open for the heretical groups.

[2] Ibn Hajr, *Fath* (al-Maktaba al-Tijaariyyah), vol. 13, p. 149.

> knows that you do stand [to pray at night] a little less than two-thirds of the night, or half the night, or a third of the night, and so do a party of those with you. And Allah measures the night and the day. He knows that you are unable to pray the whole night, so He has turned to you [in mercy]. So, recite of the Quran as much as may be easy for you. He knows that there will be some among you sick, others traveling through the land, seeking Allah's bounty, and yet others fighting in Allah's cause. So recite as much of the Quran as may be easy [for you], and perform the *salaat*, give the zakat, and lend to Allah and goodly loan. And whatever good you send before you for yourselves, you will certainly find it with Allah, better and greater in reward. And seek forgiveness of Allah. Verily, Allah is oft-forgiving, most merciful" (*al-Muzzammil* 20).[1]

- It is very important to realize that the obligatory deeds which are beloved to Allah are not only the outward deeds but they also include the deeds of the heart. The obligatory deeds of the heart are indeed of greatest importance and it is those deeds that a person might find the hardest to fulfill. Al-Shaukaani quotes an ex-Hindu who converted to Islam as saying, "One night, my soul told me to go and destroy the idol that I was worshipping and I was able to destroy it. However, I have spent about twenty years trying to destroy the idol that is inside of me and I have not been able to do it. My struggle against it has not helped me at all." Al-Shaukaani further adds that the most dangerous portions of a person's faults and sins are respect to internal matters. One may be stopped from doing the visible sins by cowardice, shyness or the authorities. However, there are no such restraints on the internal sins which no one of mankind witnesses. When a person purifies the internal aspects, then he is truly ready to join the ranks of the foremost *auliyaa* of Allah.[2]
- If there is some kind of conflict between performing an obligatory act and a recommended act— wherein they cannot both cannot be performed— the obligatory act takes precedence over the recommended act.[3]
- It has been said, "Whoever occupies himself with the obligatory deeds instead of the voluntary deeds is excused. And whoever occupies himself with the voluntary deeds instead of the obligatory deeds is deceived."[4] In fact, it is one of the goals and deceptions of Satan that he gets the person occupied with some specific deeds while other deeds are much more important or much more virtuous. Unfortunately, many people do not realize that this is one of the traps of Satan. Such people have no idea,

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[1] Ibn Taimiya, *Majmoo*, vol. 10, p. 194.

[2] Al-Shaukaani, *Qatr*, p. 454.

[3] Cf., Abdul Rahmaan al-Saadi, *Buhjat Quloob al-Abraar wa Qurrat Uyoon al-Akhyaar fi Sharh Jawaami al-Akhbaar* (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Maarif, 1984), p. 104.

[4] Quoted in Fareed, *al-Tazkiyah*, p. 23.

when they fall into it, that they are being tricked by Satan. They may think that since they are doing good deeds, there is no way that they are falling for one of the traps of Satan.

- Al-Shaukaani notes that there is nothing in this hadith that indicates that a person must continually perform voluntary deeds in order to get closer to Allah. Instead, he may perform them from time to time. Whenever he performs them, he is getting closer to Allah, even if he does not perform them on a continual basis. However, the more he performs them and the more continual he is, the closer he continues to get to Allah.[1]
- Ibn Rajab points out that one of the greatest deeds by which one comes closer to Allah is the recitation and study of the Quran. Khabaab ibn al-Arat said, "Get as close to Allah as you can. And realize that you do not get closer to Him by anything that is more beloved to Him than His own speech." In general, the one who loves another loves to hear the other's speech. Uthmaan ibn Affaan said, "If your hearts become pure, you will never have enough of the words of your Lord." Ibn Masood said, "Whoever loves the Quran loves Allah and His messenger."[2]
- Al-Bukhari recorded this hadith in the "Book of *Riqaaq* (those hadith which make the heart tender by affecting the emotions and feelings)," "Chapter on Humility". He put it there because getting close to Allah by voluntary deeds is only done by those people who are completely humble and submissive to Allah. Similarly, having love for the beloved servants of Allah (His *auliyaa*) only comes about through humility and humbleness. Furthermore, some of Allah's *auliyaa* are the poorest and most humble people of this world. One must love them and be kind to them and accept them as one's brothers. This can only be accomplished by those who are humble and free of pride.[3] Therefore, this hadith demonstrates the importance of having humility and humbleness. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) stated,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ أَوْحَى إِلَيَّ أَنْ تَوَاضَعُوا حَتَّى لا يَفْخَرَ أَحَدٌ عَلَى أَحَدٍ

"Allah has revealed to me that you must be humble, so that no one boasts over another." (Recorded by Muslim.)

- No matter what noble status a believer reaches, he will always be in need of Allah and in need of worshipping Him. As is shown in this hadith, he will still have to ask of Allah and he will still need to seek refuge in Allah. This was the way of the prophets and messengers. They always had hope in Allah. Yet, they also had a fear of Allah, even though they were from

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[1] Al-Shaukaani, *Qatr*, p. 421.
[2] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, pp. 342-343,
[3] Cf., ibn Hajr, *Fath* (al-Maktaba al-Tijaariyyah), vol. 13, p. 150.

Allah's most exclusive *auliyaa*. The Prophet (peace be upon him) himself said,

وَاللَّهِ مَا أَدْرِي وَأَنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ مَا يُفْعَلُ بِي

"By Allah, although I am the Messenger of Allah, I do not know what He will do with me." (Recorded by al-Bukhari.) If anyone believes that he has reached a level wherein he is no longer in need of Allah, beseeching Him and worshipping Him, he has become deluded. He will then be one of the enemies of Allah instead of one of His *auliyaa*. Indeed, as a person comes closer and closer to Allah, His reliance upon Allah, his understanding of his need for Allah and his worship of Him becomes even greater. Those are some of the signs that he is getting closer to Allah and is truly one of His *auliyaa*.[1]

- Everyone should realize that every act of disobedience is a type of fighting or war against Allah. Al-Hasan al-Basri once said, "O children of Adam, do you have the ability to fight against Allah. Whoever disobeys Allah is fighting against Him. But the greater the sin, the greater is the battle against Allah."[2] Allah describes the people who devour interest as fighting Allah and His messenger because of their great crimes and their great injustice to the slaves of Allah. Therefore, the people who commit these crimes are also opposing the servants of Allah and Allah has given support and love to His devoted servants. This hadith clearly states an important point that is misunderstood by many Muslims—- as well as non-Muslims. There are many people who claim, perhaps sincerely, to love Allah or God and be devoted to Him but at the same time they commit acts that are clearly sins or, in other words, deeds that Allah hates (such as not performing the obligatory prayers, not fasting the month of Ramadhaan, not avoiding the taking of interest, not avoiding adultery and so on). This hadith shows that, if such people are sincere in their claims, they have no understanding of God. Their religion or thinking is not based on the clear teachings of the His revelations but is simply based on ignorance or their own desires.[3] By their performing of these deeds— and their lack of any conscience or ill feeling from performing these deeds— they are testifying against themselves. They are showing that their claim to love Allah is a lie because by their deeds they are proving that they are not working for the sake of Allah but they are fighting against Allah by committing sins; consequently, Allah also is fighting or opposing them.

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[1] Cf., al-Shaukaani, *Qatr*, pp. 485-6.

[2] Quoted in al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 270.

[3] This is clearly the case with respect to Christians, many of whom claim that they believe in God and love Him yet they continue to perform the deeds that God clearly abhors and opposes. An example of this type of behavior, so common in the United States, is the homosexuals who try to defend their practice by saying that they believe in Jesus and that "Jesus did not come to condemn their sexuality." Similarly, many of the people who have been influenced by Sufis also have a tendency to behave in this manner— believing that the faith in the heart is sufficient and need not be followed by deeds. But this belief— which the unbelievers (including the Orientalists and missionaries) have always attempted to enter into Islam— is clearly inconsistent with the teachings of Islam. In Islam, as is clear in the Quran and sunnah, the real faith, besides being firm

Summary of the Hadith

- To oppose one of Allah's devotees is equivalent to opposing or fighting Allah.
- This hadith demonstrates the "power" of the beloved slaves of Allah. Such slaves are never left on their own but instead they have the full support and aid of Allah, the All-Powerful.
- There is nothing equal to the obligatory deeds.
- Obligatory acts are the most beloved to Allah and one should perform them first and then move on to the voluntary deeds, and not vice-versa.
- The one who performs the obligatory and voluntary deeds moves closest to Allah.
- Allah blesses His beloved servants with special guidance and mercy as well as answering their prayers.
- Whatever "level" a slave reaches, he must always keep his relationship with Allah in complete submission. When he is in need, he must turn to Allah. When he seeks refuge, he must seek refuge in Allah. Due to his close relationship with Allah, Allah will respond quickly to him under those circumstances.

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in the heart, is demonstrated by the proper deeds or, in other words, the implementation of the guidance of the Quran and sunnah.

Hadith #39
“Allah Has Pardoned...”

عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا أَنَّ رَسُوْلَ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ
عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ إِنَّ اللهَ تَجَاوَزَ لِي عَنْ أُمَّتِي الخَطَأَ وَالنِّسْيَانَ
وَمَا اسْتُكْرِهُوا عَلَيْهِ
حَدِيْثٌ حَسَنٌ رَوَاهُ ابنُ مَاجَه وَالبَيْهَقِيُّ وَغَيْرُهُمَا

On the authority of ibn Abbaas (may Allah be pleased with both of them): The Messenger of Allah (may Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him) said, “On my behalf, Allah has pardoned for my Nation [what is done] mistakenly, out of forgetfulness or under duress.”
A *hasan* hadith recorded by ibn Maajah, al-Baihaqi and others.

Selected Vocabulary

تجاوز	- “to pardon, overlook, pass over something without any punishment or reckoning”
لي	- “for me, on my behalf”
الخطأ	- “mistake”[1]
النسيان	- “forgetfulness”
استكرهوا	- “coercion, duress, being forced to do something one does not like”

Takhreej[2]

This is a well-known hadith quoted in a number of books related to Islamic legal theory. In those texts, this hadith is quoted with a number of different wordings. Therefore, the goal of this section of *takhreej* will be twofold. One goal is to determine the authenticity of the hadith. The second goal will be to determine the exact or correct wording of the hadith. The hadith will be discussed according to its different narrations.

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[1] In reading the commentaries to this hadith, one may conclude that “unintentional” would be the correct translation of the word here. However, it seems that the word “mistake” or “mistakenly” is better since the term also implies an act that was done on purpose but it contained some aspect of a mistake. For example, if a person kills another person in the heat of battle, thinking that the other person was a non-Muslim while it turned out that he was a Muslim, his act of killing was completely intentional but he was mistaken with respect to who he thought the other person was.

[2] Those readers not interested in the details of the *takhreej* may skip ahead to the subsection entitled, “Conclusions about the Grading and Wording of the Hadith.”

(1) This hadith is recorded with the following wording,

غَفَرَ لِي عَنْ أُمَّتِي الخَطَأَ والنِّسْيَانَ وَالإِسْتِكْرَاهَ

"Forgiven, for my sake, for my Nation is [what is done] by mistake, out of forgetfulness or out of coercion." With this wording, it seems that it was only recorded by ibn Adi in *al-Kaamil fi Dhuafaa al-Rijaal.*[1] The chain is the following:

Ibn Adi → Khaalid ibn al-Nadhr and Muhammad ibn Yoosuf al-Asfari → Muhammad ibn Musa al-Harashi → Abdul Raheem ibn Zaid al-Ammi → Zaid [the father of Abdul Raheem] → Saeed ibn Jubair → ibn Abbaas → the Prophet (peace be upon him)

This chain, however, is completely unacceptable. Ibn Adi called this hadith a rejected hadith. About Abdul Raheem ibn Zaid, al-Bukhari stated that he was abandoned as a narrator. Abu Dawood and Abu Zarah called him weak. Al-Nasaai stated that he is abandoned (*matrook*) as a narrator. It is reported from Yahya ibn Maeen that he called him an evil liar.[2] Furthermore, his father, Zaid ibn al-Hawari was also a weak narrator, although it seems that his quality was better than that of his son.[3]

In conclusion, this chain and wording is unacceptable. It can neither be supported by other chains nor can it be used to support other chains.

(2) A second wording for this hadith is,

رَفَعَ اللهُ عَنْ هذِهِ الأُمَّة ثَلاَثاً الخَطَأَ والنِّسْيَانَ وَالأَمْرَ يَكْرَهُوْنَ عَلَيْهِ

"Allah has raised[4] from this Nation three things: mistake, forgetfulness and a matter that is forced upon them." With this wording, it is recorded by ibn Adi in *al-Kaamil* and by Abu al-Shaikh in *Tabaqaat al-Muhaditheen bi-Isbahaan.*[5] Ibn Adi's chain for this hadith is the following[6]:

Ibn Adi → Hudhaifah ibn al-Hasan → Abu Umayyah Muhammad ibn Ibraheem → Jafar ibn Jasr ibn Farqad → Jasr ibn Farqad → al-Hasan → Abu Bakrah → The Prophet (peace be upon him)

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[1] ibn Adi, vol. 5, pp. 1920-1921.

[2] See ibn Adi, vol. 5, p. 1920; Ahmad ibn Hajr, *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb* (Beirut: Muassasah al-Risaalah, 1996), vol. 2, pp. 569-570.

[3] Cf., ibn Hajr, *Tahdheeb* (Muassasah), vol. 1, pp. 663-664.

[4] Meaning, "removed".

[5] The work by Abu al-Shaikh is not available to this author. However, according to ibn Muhammad (p. 219), the chain of narrators used by Abu al-Shaikh is the same as that used by ibn Adi and discussed above.

[6] Ibn Adi, vol. 2, p. 573.

Like the previous narration, there are two problems with this chain: Jafar ibn Jasr ibn Farqad and his father Jasr ibn Farqad. Ibn Adi records this hadith as one of Jafar's rejected reports and he said that the possible source is his father Jasr. Al-Uqaily said about Jafar that his memory was very poor and he would narrate rejected reports. Al-Dhahabi described his hadith as rejected.[1]

Jasr has also been heavily criticized. Al-Bukhari, al-Nasaai and al-Daaraqutni all mentioned him in their short collections of weak narrators. Al-Nasaai said his hadith should not be recorded while al-Daaraqutni described him as a rejected narrator. Yahya ibn Maeen stated, "He is [equal to] nothing," implying that he is a weak narrator. Al-Dhahabi and ibn Hajr have also declared him to be weak.[2]

The conclusion is that this narration and wording is rejected. It is neither to be used as supporting evidence or to be supported.

(3) A third narration of this hadith is the following:

وَضَعَ اللهُ عَنْ أُمَّتِي الخَطَأَ والنِّسْيَانَ وَمَا اسْتُكْرِهُوا عَلَيْهِ

"Allah has removed for my Nation [what is done] by mistake, out of forgetfulness and under coercion." This is the wording of the hadith that is most often found in the books on Islamic legal theory.

With this wording, this hadith is recorded by ibn Maajah[3], Abu Nuaim in *Hilyat* and al-Baihaqi in *al-Sunan al-Kubra.*[4] This wording has what looks like three different chains but, in reality, that may not be the case. Figure 39.1 gives the details of these chains.

These chains all revolve around both al-Waleed ibn Muslim and Muhammad ibn Musaffa. (They are highlighted in the figure.) This means that these two or one of them related this same hadith in three different ways. There are some scholars of hadith, like al-Zuhri, who were well-known for collecting many different chains for the same hadith. It would not be strange for al-Zuhri to narrate the same hadith in many different ways or with many different chains. However, if a narrator is not of that caliber, when he narrates the same hadith in different manners, it is a sign that he did not record it or memorize it properly. In other words, it is a sign that he is confused concerning the matter.

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[1] For more about Jafar ibn Jasr, see ibn Adi, vol. 2, p. 573; al-Dhahabi, *Meezaan*, vol. 1 pp. 403-4; al-Dhahabi, *Al-Mughni fi al-Dhuafaa*, vol. 1, p. 132; ibn Hajr, *Lisaan al-Meezaan*, vol. 2, pp. 140-141.

[2] For more about Jasr, see Muhammad ibn Hibbaan, *Kitaab al-Majrooheen*, pp. 217-218; al-Dhahabi, *Meezan*, vol. 1, pp. 398-399; ibn Hajr, *Lisaan*, vol. 2, pp. 132-133; Abdul Azeez al-Seerwaan, *Al-Majmoo fi al-Dhuafaa wa al-Matrukeen* (Beirut: Daar al-Qalam, 1985), p. 75, 295 and 418.

[3] Al-Nawawi was not being very precise when he stated, after recording the hadith, "Recorded by ibn Maajah, al-Baihaqi and others." Ibn Maajah has recorded this hadith twice. One is through ibn Abbaas and it is not the wording that al-Nawawi presented. The second is the wording that al-Nawawi recorded but it is not through ibn Abbaas.

[4] See, respectively, Muhammad ibn Maajah, *Sunan* (no publication information given, 1984), vol. 1, p. 378; Abu Nuaim al-Isbahaani, *Hilyat*, vol. 6, p. 352; al-Baihaqi, vol. 7, p. 357.

Al-Waleed ibn Muslim is a very famous, trustworthy narrator. He was known for being especially knowledgeable concerning the hadith of al-Auzaai. Ahmad ibn Hanbal did, though, say about him that he made a lot of mistakes. Furthermore, al-Haitham ibn Khaarijah told him that he ruined the hadith of al-Auzaai. This was because al-Waleed used to perform an act known as *tadlees al-taswiyyah*. This is where he would drop a weak narrator from further up the chain and replace that weak narrator's name with the term *an* (a vague term meaning "on the authority of"). When he heard hadith from al-Auzaai on the authority of weak narrators, he would drop the weak narrators name from the chain and that would make the hadith look better.[1]

The source of the problem in these narrations is probably Muhammad ibn Musaffa. Ibn Hibbaan wrote about this narrator,

> He was one of the people with a poor memory, to the point that he would exchange the chains of the hadith and narrate *mursal* reports completely back to the Prophet (peace be upon him). It is not allowed to use him as evidence when he is solitary in what he reports. When he is in agreement with the trustworthy narrators, he may be used as evidence. When he is not in disagreement with the trustworthy narrators, I see no harm in considering him as possible corroborating evidence.[2]

From his entry in *Tahdheeb al-Kamaal*, there seems to be wide agreement that he was a narrator who, although honest, committed a large number of mistakes.[3]

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[1] For more about al-Waleed ibn Muslim, see his entry in al-Mizi, vol. 31, pp. 86-99.

[2] Ibn Hibbaan, *al-Majrooheen*, vol. 2, p. 293.

[3] See al-Mizi, vol. 26, pp. 465-469.

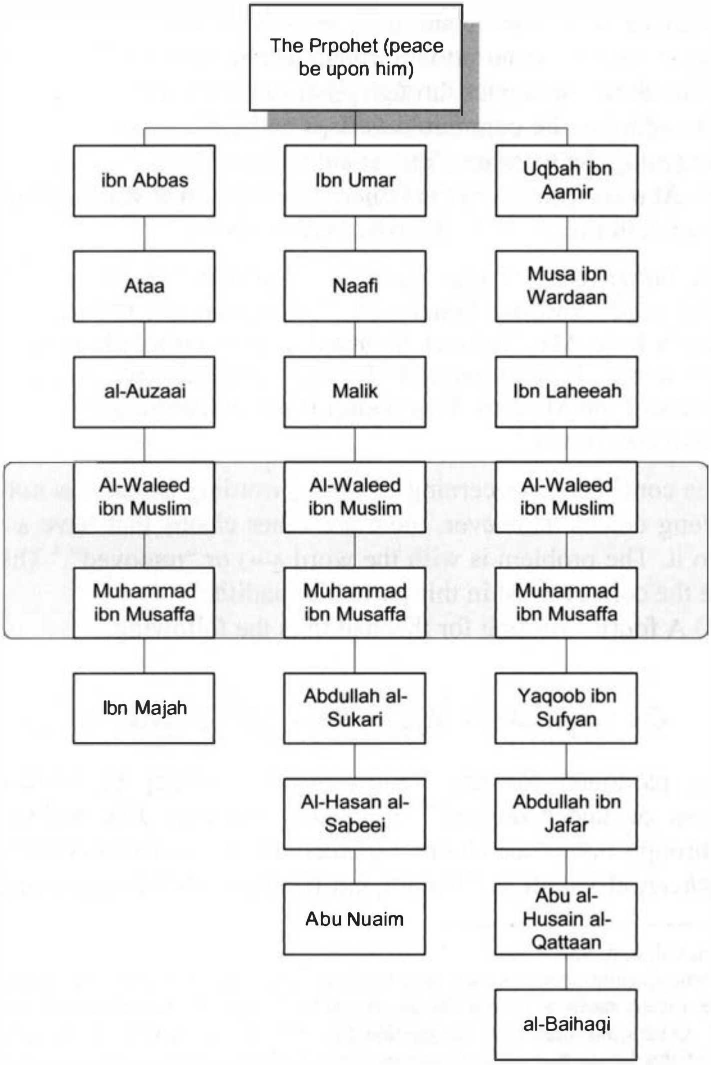
The Prpohet (peace be upon him)
ibn Abbas
Ibn Umar
Uqbah ibn Aamir
Ataa
Naafi
Musa ibn Wardaan
al-Auzaai
Malik
Ibn Laheeah
Al-Waleed ibn Muslim
Al-Waleed ibn Muslim
Al-Waleed ibn Muslim
Muhammad ibn Musaffa
Muhammad ibn Musaffa
Muhammad ibn Musaffa
Ibn Majah
Abdullah al-Sukari
Yaqoob ibn Sufyan
Al-Hasan al-Sabeei
Abdullah ibn Jafar
Abu Nuaim
Abu al-Husain al-Qattaan
al-Baihaqi

Figure 39.1. Chains for the Hadith, “Allah has removed from My Nation…”

In addition to the confused way that either al-Waleed or ibn Musaffa narrated it, each one of these chains has some other problems. In the first chain, the link is broken between Ataa and ibn Abbaas. The second chain goes through Imam Malik. There seems to be agreement that this is definitely not one of Imam Malik’s hadith.[1] After recording the hadith, Abu Nuaim wrote, “It is strange as a hadith of Malik. Only ibn al-Musaffa on the authority of al-

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[1] See ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 363.

Waleed narrates it in that fashion."[1] As has been noted, they also narrate it in other ways and this narration through Malik is considered one of their mistakes. The third chain goes through Abdullah ibn Laheeah, who was a weak narrator.[2] In addition, he committed *tadlees* and this narration from him is in a vague form (using the word *an*, "on the authority of").

Ibn Abu Haatim asked his father, Abu Haatim al-Raazi, about the three chains depicted in Figure 39.1. Ibn Abu Haatim wrote,

> My father said, "Those hadith are rejected," as if they were fabricated. And my father said, "Al-Auzaai did not hear that hadith from Ataa. Instead, he heard it from a man whom he did not name. It was possibly either Abdullah ibn Aamir or Ismaaeel ibn Muslim. That hadith is not authentic and its chain is not confirmed.[3]

The conclusion concerning this third wording is that it is not supported by any strong chains. However, there are other chains that have a very close meaning to it. The problem is with the word وضع or "removed".[4] This does not seem to be the correct word in this particular hadith.

(4) A fourth wording for this hadith is the following,

إِنَّ اللهَ تَجَاوَزَ عَنْ أُمَّتِي الخَطَأَ وَالنِّسْيَانَ وَمَا اسْتُكْرِهُوا عَلَيْهِ

"Allah has pardoned for my Nation [what is done] by mistake, out of forgetfulness or under duress."[5] With this wording, this hadith has been narrated through numerous chains and recorded by al-Tabaraani in *al-Kabeer* and *al-Sagheer*, al-Uqaili, al-Haakim, ibn Hibbaan, al-Daaraqutni and ibn Adi.[1]

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[1] Abu Nuaim, vol. 6, p. 352.

[2] There is some dispute about exactly how weak a narrator ibn Laheeah was. Some say that he only became a weak narrator after a fire destroyed his books and he was forced to narrate from his memory. Others say that even before that fire, his narrations were weak. One of the best discussions of ibn Laheeah may be found in Ahmad Abdul-Kareem's footnotes to Muhammad ibn Sayyid al-Naas, *Al-Nafih al-Shadhi fi Sharh Jaami al-Tirmidhi* (Riyadh: Daar al-Aasimah, 1409 A.H.), vol. 2, pp. 854-863.

[3] Abdul-Rahmaan ibn Abu Haatim al-Raazi, *Ilal al-Hadeeth* (Makkah: Daar al-Baaz, 1985), vol. 1, p. 431. Ahmad ibn Hanbal's son asked Ahmad about this hadith and he said this father strongly rejected it. Then he said, "It is only narrated [meaning, Allah knows best, with a good chain] from al-Hasan from the Prophet (peace be upon him)." See Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *Kitaab al-Ilal wa Marifah al-Rijaal* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islaami, 1988), vol. 1, pp. 561-562.

[4] It is this wording that one finds in many of the books on Islamic legal theory. After stating that wording, the legal theorists then discuss what is meant by the hadith since acts of forgetfulness, mistake and coercion still exist in the Nation of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

[5] There are some very slight differences in the way this hadith is narrated. However, they do not affect the meaning at all. Some are as shown in the text above. Others begin with, تجاوز or "Allah pardons," without the emphasizing word *inna*. Others state, إن الله تجاوز عن أمتي ثلاثة ("Allah has pardoned my Nation with respect to three...").

[1] See, respectively, Sulaimaan al-Tabaraani, *Al-Mujam al-Kabeer* (Cairo: Maktabah ibn Taimiyah, n.d.), vol. 2, p. 97 and vol. 11, pp. 133-134; Amreer, *Al-Raudh*, vol. 2, p. 52; Muhammad al-Uqaili, *Kitaab al-Dhuafaa al-Kabeer* (Beirut: Daar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1984),

It has been narrated from the Companions ibn Abbaas, ibn Umar, Thaubaan and Abu al-Dardaa. It has also been narrated in *mursal* form[1] from al-Hasan al-Basri, as recorded by Abdul Razzaaq, ibn Abu Shaibah, Saeed ibn Mansoor and ibn al-Jauzi.[2] Ibn Abu Shaiba also records another *mursal* report from Ata.[3] Figure 39.2 shows the different chains coming from the Companions other than ibn Abbaas. Figure 39.3 shows the different chains coming from ibn Abbaas.

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vol. 4, p. 145; al-Haakim, , vol. 2, p. 198; ibn Hibbaan in al-Faaris, vol. 16, p. 202; Ali al-Daaraqutni, *Sunan al-Daaraqutni* (Beirut: Aalim al-Kitaab, 1983), vol. 4, pp. 170-171; ibn Adi, vol. 3, p. 1172. Ibn Muhammad (p. 216) notes that it is also narrated with the same chains by al-Saidaawi in *Mujam al-Shuyookh*, ibn Hazm in *al-Ihkaam* and ibn al-Mundhir in *al-Iqnaa.* He (p. 217) also mentions another chain recorded by al-Tabaraani in *Musnad al-Shaamiyeen* but that chain contains a liar in it and it has been ignored for the purposes here.

[1] *Mursal* here means that it is a report from a Follower on the authority of the Prophet (peace be upon him) without any mention of the name of the Companion who originally narrated that hadith.

[2] See, respectively, Abdul Razzaaq ibn Hammaam al-Sanaani, *al-Musannaf* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islaami, 1983), vol. 6, pp. 409-410; Ibn Abu Shaiba, *Al-Musannaf*, vol. 4, p. 59; Saeed ibn Mansoor, *Sunan Saeed ibn Mansoor* (Beirut: Daar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1985), vol. 1, p. 287; Abdul Rahmaan ibn al-Jauzi, *Al-Tahqeeq fi Ahaadeeth al-Khilaaf* (Beirut: Daar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1994), vol. 2, p. 293. Some of the narrations mention the word تجاوز while others state, عفا. The meaning of both is virtually the same. It should also be noted that in *al-Musannaf*, the chain is stated as, “Hishaam on the authority of Hasaan on the authority of Hasan.” However, that is probably just a typographical error as the correct chain is, “Hishaam son of Hasaan on the authority of Hasan.” Allah knows best.

[3] Ibn Abu Shaibah, vol. 4, p. 153.

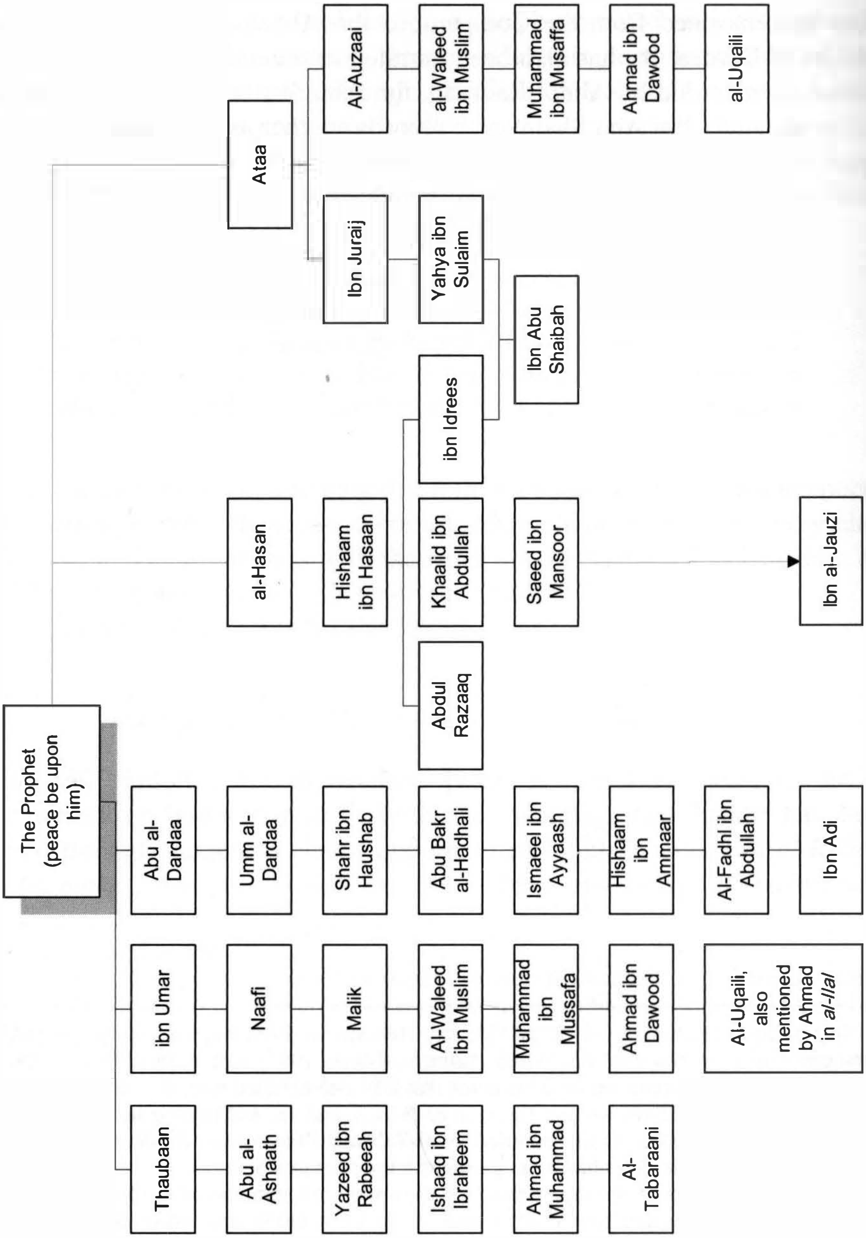
The Prophet (peace be upon him)
Thaubaan
Abu al-Ashaath
Yazeed ibn Rabeeah
Ishaaq ibn Ibraheem
Ahmad ibn Muhammad
Al-Tabaraani
ibn Umar
Naafi
Malik
Al-Waleed ibn Muslim
Muhammad ibn Mussafa
Ahmad ibn Dawood
Al-Uqaili, also mentioned by Ahmad in *al-Ilal*
Abu al-Dardaa
Umm al-Dardaa
Shahr ibn Haushab
Abu Bakr al-Hadhali
Ismaeel ibn Ayyaash
Hishaam ibn Ammaar
Al-Fadhl ibn Abdullah
Ibn Adi
al-Hasan
Hishaam ibn Hasaan
Abdul Razaaq
Khaalid ibn Abdullah
ibn Idrees
Saeed ibn Mansoor
Ibn al-Jauzi
Ibn Abu Shaibah
Ataa
Ibn Juraij
Yahya ibn Sulaim
Al-Auzaai
al-Waleed ibn Muslim
Muhammad ibn Musaffa
Ahmad ibn Dawood
al-Uqaili

Figure 39.2 Chains for the Hadith, "Allah has pardoned for my Nation..." from other than ibn Abbaas

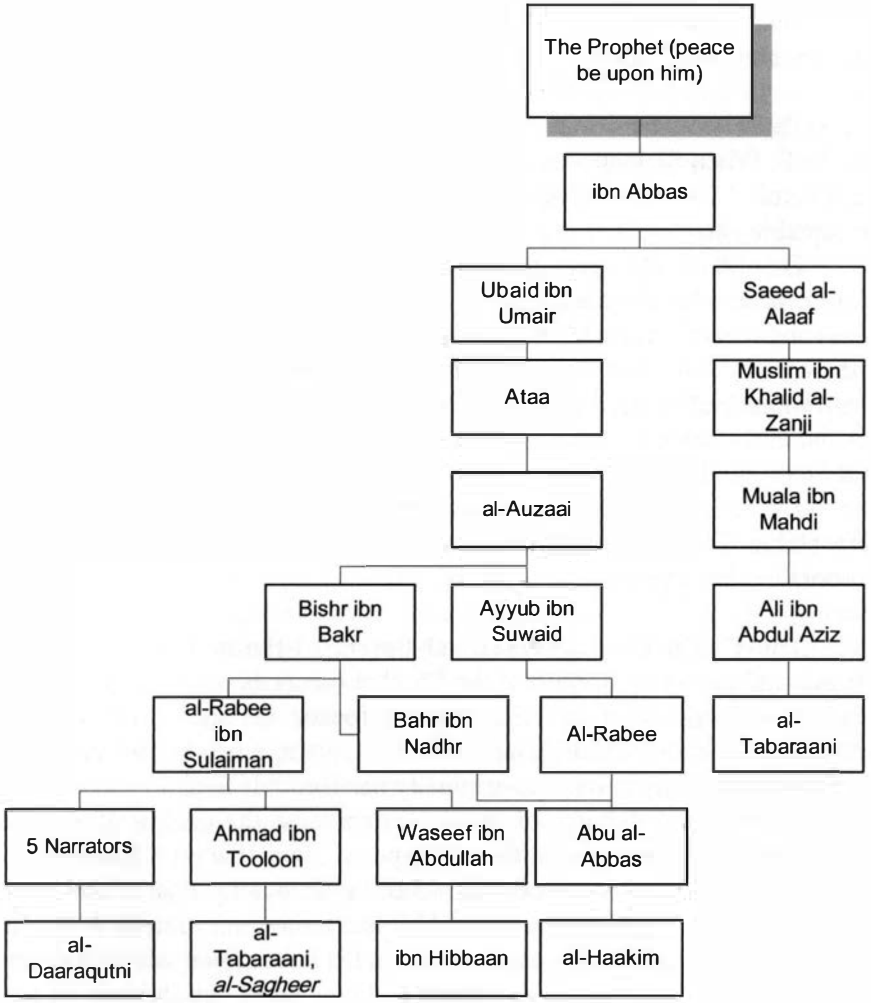
The Prophet (peace be upon him)
ibn Abbas
Ubaid ibn Umair
Saeed al-Alaaf
Ataa
Muslim ibn Khalid al-Zanji
al-Auzaai
Muala ibn Mahdi
Bishr ibn Bakr
Ayyub ibn Suwaid
Ali ibn Abdul Aziz
al-Rabee ibn Sulaiman
Bahr ibn Nadhr
Al-Rabee
al-Tabaraani
5 Narrators
Ahmad ibn Tooloon
Waseef ibn Abdullah
Abu al-Abbas
al-Daaraqutni
al-Tabaraani, *al-Sagheer*
ibn Hibbaan
al-Haakim

Figure 39.3 Chains for the Hadith, "Allah has pardoned for my Nation..." from ibn Abbaas

The Chain from Thaubaan: The problem with this chain is Yazeed ibn Rabeeah. He is a completely rejected narrator according to al-Nasaai. Al-Jauzijaani said that he feared that his hadith were fabrications.[1]

The Chain from ibn Umar: This chain was discussed earlier. There is widespread agreement that this hadith is not one of the hadith of Imam Malik.

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[1] See ibn Muhammad, p. 217.

The mistake probably originated with ibn Musaffa who was known for confusing chains of hadith.

The Chain from Abu al-Dardaa: This chain goes through Abu Bakr al-Hudhali. When Shubah was asked about al-Hudhali, he said, "Leave me so I do not vomit." There is widespread agreement that he is a rejected, completely unacceptable narrator.[1]

This chain also goes through Shahr ibn Haushab. In *al-Taqreeb*, Ibn Hajr stated that he is honest but he has lots of *mursal* (reports with broken chains) and lots of errors. Maroof and al-Arnaoot point out that this is probably not the correct description of Shahr. Instead, he should be considered weak but his narrations can be used as supporting evidence. This is more consistent with what the early scholars, such as Yahya ibn Saeed, Shubah, Abu Haatim, said about Shahr ibn Haushab.[2]

The above three narrations of this hadith must be considered unacceptable. They can neither be used as corroborating evidence nor can they corroborate other reports.

The Chain from al-Hasan al-Basri: Al-Hasan was a very famous Follower and not a Companion of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Hence, the chain between al-Hasan and the Prophet (peace be upon him) is broken. Therefore, this is one of al-Hasan's *mursal* reports, since he did not mention the name of the Companion who originally narrated this hadith.

There is a difference of opinion concerning the quality of al-Hasan's *mursal* reports. A *mursal* hadith is a type of weak hadith. However, some narrators' *mursal* reports are considered of better quality than others because when those *mursal* reports were studied in detail, they were found, for the most part, to have known and accepted sources. In his dissertation, al-Auni discusses al-Hasan's *mursal* reports in great detail and concludes that they are of a good quality.[3] This means that they may be used for supporting evidence and they may be supported by other reports.

The one who narrated this hadith on the authority of al-Hasan was Hishaam ibn Hasaan. Although Hishaam was a trustworthy narrator, there is some question about his narrations on the authority of al-Hasan al-Basri. Some claimed that his narrations from al-Hasan were actually from what he found in Haushab's book. This is based on a couple of reports where the people said that they never saw Hishaam in the company of al-Hasan. At the same time, ibn Uyainah said that Hishaam was the most knowledgeable of the people in the hadith of al-Hasan.[1] It has also been reported that Hishaam was al-Hasan's neighbor for ten years. Al-Auni, who also discussed this issue in detail, noted that Hishaam lived a long life and those who did not see him in al-Hasan's company were present at times other than when Hishaam studied with al-Hasan. Al-Auni concludes, as did numerous scholars before him, that Hishaam's narrations from al-Hasan are sound and correct.[2]

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[1] See his entry in ibn Hajr, *Tahdheeb*, vol. 4, p. 498.

[2] Bashaar Maroof and Shuaib al-Arnaoot, *Tahreer Taqreeb al-Tahdheeb* (Beirut: Muassasah al-Risaalah, 1997), vol. 2, p. 122.

[3] Al-Shareef al-Aooni, *al-Mursal al-Khafi wa Alaaqatuhu bi-l-Tadlees: Diraasah Nadhiriyyah wa Tabeeqiyyah ala Marwiyyaat al-Hasan al-Basri* (Al-Thuqbah, Saudi Arabia: Daar al-Hijrah, 1997), vol. 1, pp. 299-454.

The conclusion about this chain, therefore, is that it is a good *mursal* report. This means that, by itself, it is still considered weak. However, it is acceptable as supporting evidence and it may also be strengthened due to corroborating evidence.

The Chains from Ataa: The link between Ataa and the Prophet (peace be upon him) is obviously broken, since Ataa was not a Companion. Hence, it is also a *mursal* report.

Ataa was Ataa ibn Abu Ribaah, a well-known and trustworthy narrator.[3] The first chain from Ataa is from ibn Juraij. Ibn Juraij is Abdul Maalik ibn Abdul Azeez ibn Juraij. He was considered one of the most knowledgeable in the hadith of Ataa because he stayed with Ataa for seventeen years. The problem with ibn Juraij is that he has been accused of committing *tadlees*; in fact, he has been accused of committing a terrible form of *tadlees* wherein he only drops the narrator's name if he is a weak narrator. However, ibn Juraij himself said regarding his narrations from Ataa, "If I said, 'Ataa said,' it means I heard it directly from him even I did not say, 'I heard.'" This narration in question is one where he simply said, "Ataa said."[4] Yahya ibn Sulaim, the next in the chain, was an honest person, whose hadith are good except when he narrates from Ubaidullah ibn Umar.[5]

The conclusion concerning this chain is that it is also a good *mursal* report. Again, this means that it may be used as supporting evidence for other reports.

The second chain from Ataa goes through Muhammad ibn Musaffa from al-Waleed ibn Muslim once again. At least in this case, however, they are supported in both the wording as well as the source of the hadith. Ibn Hibbaan would accept ibn Musaffa in this case. Hence, it could be a case where they did not make a mistake while other narrations from ibn Musaffa are his mistakes.

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[1] Such reports may be found in ibn Hajr, *Tahdheeb*, vol. 4, pp. 268-269.
[2] See al-Auni, vol. 2, pp. 555-561.
[3] See ibn Hajr, *Tahdheeb*, vol. 3, pp. 101-103.
[4] Cf., al-Dumaini, pp. 383-386.
[5] See Maroof and al-Arnaoot, vol. 4, pp. 86-87.

The Chains from ibn Abbaas: The chains of ibn Hibbaan, al-Tabaraani and al-Daraqutni are excellent chains.[1] Al-Arnaoot said of ibn Hibbaan's chain,

> Its chain is *sahih* according to al-Bukhari's standard. Its narrators are trustworthy and from the narrators of the two *Sahih*s [of al-Bukhari and Muslim], with the exception of Bishr ibn Bikr who is only found in *al-Bukhari.*[2]

But this is, in essence, the same chain criticized by Abu Haatim, who claimed that al-Auzaai did not hear this hadith from Ataa. Al-Albaani has responded to this criticism by saying,

> I am not of the same opinion as Abu Haatim, may Allah have mercy on him. Certainly, it is not allowed to declare a hadith of a trustworthy narrator weak, especially if he was a noble Imam such as al-Auzaai, solely on the basis of a claim that he did not hear the hadith directly. Therefore, we are following the basic principle that a trustworthy narrator's narration is considered authentic until it is made clear that there is some break in the chain.[3]

This same hadith was also narrated from Bishr by Bahr on the authority of al-Auzaai, as recorded by al-Haakim. It is also an authentic chain as Bishr is a trustworthy narrator.

Al-Haakim has another recording of this hadith but it is from al-Rabee on the authority of Ayyoob, instead of Bishr. This particular chain is not very strong due to the presence of Ayyoob. Ibn Hajr called Ayyoob, "Honest, mistake-prone." Maroof and al-Arnaoot say that it would be better simply to term him a weak narrator. He was considered weak by Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Abu Dawood and many others.[4]

The other chain in the figure contains Saeed al-Alaaf and Muslim ibn Khaalid al-Zanji. Saeed seems to be an unknown narrator.[5]

As for Muslim ibn Khaalid, Ibn Hajr described him as, "honest, jurist, lots of errors". Maroof and al-Arnaoot state that he should be considered weak but his narrations can be taken into consideration. Actually, there are a lot of different opinions concerning him. Al-Bukhari abandoned him completely while others considered him acceptable. In this particular case, his narration is supported by others and, if it were not for Saeed being unknown, it would be considered acceptable.[1]

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[1] The five from whom al-Daraqutni recorded this hadith are: Muhammad ibn Saaid, Abu Bakr al-Naisaboori, Musa ibn Jafar ibn Qareen, Ahmad ibn Ibraaheem ibn Habeeb al-Zaraad and Abdullah ibn Ahmad ibn Ishaaq al-Misri.

[2] Arnaoot's footnotes to al-Faarisi, vol. 16, p. 202.

[3] Al-Albaani, *Irwaa*, vol. 1, p124.

[4] Maroof and Shuaib al-Arnaoot, vol. 1, p. 160-1.

[5] See Hamdi al-Salafi, footnotes to al-Tabaraani, *Mujam al-Kabeer*, vol. 1, p. 133.

(5) A fifth wording for this hadith is:

إِنَّ اللهَ تَجَاوَزَ لِيْ عَنْ أُمَّتِي الخَطَأَ وَالنِّسْيَانَ وَمَا اسْتُكْرِهُوا عَلَيْهِ

"Allah has pardoned, on my behalf, for my Nation [what is done] by mistake, out of forgetfulness or under duress." In this manner, the hadith was recorded by ibn Maajah, al-Baihaqi and al-Tahaawi. The chains for those reports are seen in Figure 39.4.

The difference between this narration and the previous narration is that this narration makes it explicit that forgiveness is on behalf of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

The first chain of this hadith is very similar to a chain discussed earlier that went back to the Companion Abu al-Dardaa instead of Abu Dharr. The chain goes through Shahr ibn Haushab, Abu Bakr al-Hudhali and Ayyoob ibn Suwaid. They are all weak narrators, as discussed earlier.

The first chain of this narration has three problems with it, and, hence, cannot be considered an acceptable narration. Especially with the presence of Abu Bakr, it cannot even be used as supporting evidence.

The second chain is interesting because it is the same chain discussed earlier, wherein it was concluded that it is a strong chain. In this case, though, al-Haakim records it through Abu al-Abbaas on the authority of al-Rabee ibn Sulaimaan on the authority of Bishr ibn Bakr. However, as was noted earlier, al-Haakim also recorded it through the same Abu al-Abbaas from the same al-Rabee but on the authority of Ayyoob ibn Suwaid. There is no question that Abu al-Abbaas was a trustworthy narrator.[2] In this narration, he narrates the hadith from al-Rabee with the word, لي ("for my sake"), and in doing so he has contradicted at least seven others who narrated this hadith from al-Rabee. In the other narration, without the word لي in it, Abu al-Abbaas narrated it from al-Rabee from Ayyoob, thereby contradicting at least eight others who narrated this hadith from al-Rabee.

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[1] Cf., Ibn Hajr, *Tahdheeb*, vol. 4, pp. 68-69; Maroof and S. al-Arnaoot, vol. 3, pp. 371-372. Ibn Muhammad (p. 216) has unfairly stated only the negative remarks concerning Muslim without giving any of the very positive statements concerning him.

[2] Abu al-Abbaas Muhammad ibn Yaqub's biography may be found in al-Dhahabi, *Siyar Alaam al-Nubalaa*, vol. 15, pp. 452-460.

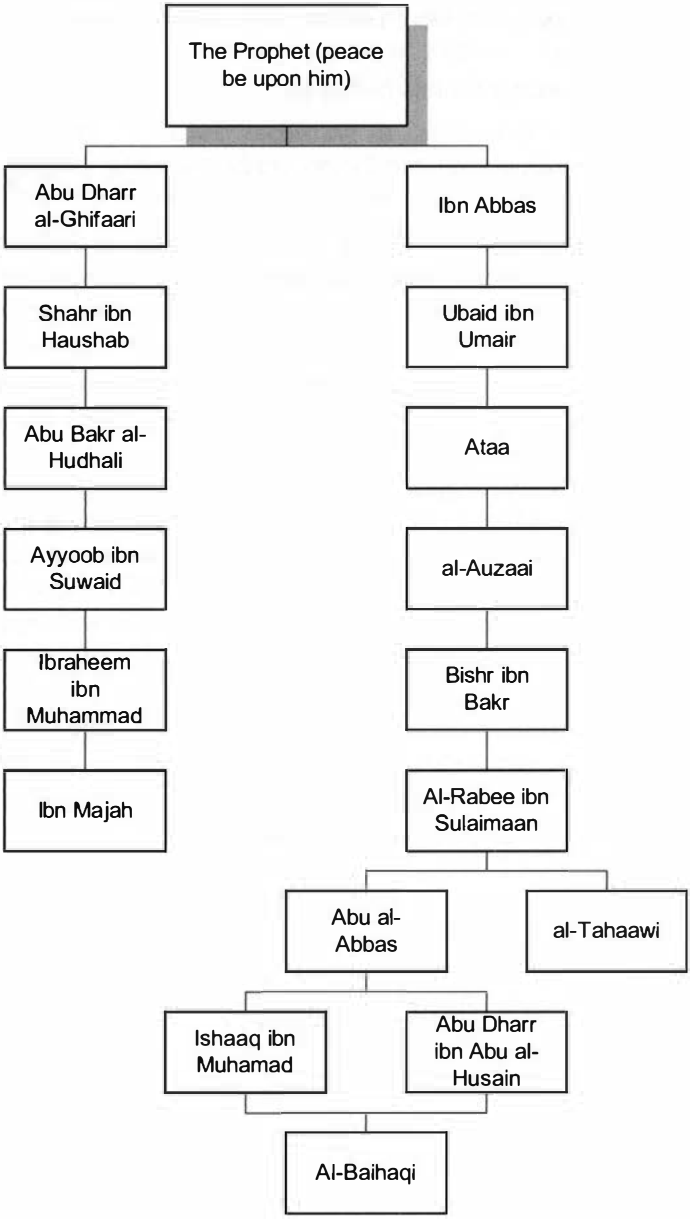
The Prophet (peace be upon him)
Abu Dharr al-Ghifaari
Ibn Abbas
Shahr ibn Haushab
Ubaid ibn Umair
Abu Bakr al-Hudhali
Ataa
Ayyoob ibn Suwaid
al-Auzaai
Ibraheem ibn Muhammad
Bishr ibn Bakr
Ibn Majah
Al-Rabee ibn Sulaimaan
Abu al-Abbas
al-Tahaawi
Ishaaq ibn Muhamad
Abu Dharr ibn Abu al-Husain
Al-Baihaqi

Figure 39.4 Chains of the Hadith, "Allah has pardoned, for my sake, my Nation..."

The other one who narrated this hadith in this manner from al-Rabee was Abu Jafar al-Tahaawi. Al-Tahaawi was a great scholar and master of hadith. However, in this particular narration, he has contradicted what at least five others have narrated from al-Rabee.[1]

(6) A sixth wording for this hadith is the following:

تَجَاوَزَ اللَّهُ لابْنِ آدَمَ عَمَّا أَخْطَأَ وَعَمَّا نَسِيَ وَعَمَّا أُكْرِهَ وَعَمَّا غُلِبَ عَلَيْهِ

“Allah has pardoned for the descendants of Adam what is done by mistake, out of forgetfulness, out of coercion and what was beyond their power to avoid.” With this wording, it is recorded by Saeed ibn Mansoor with the chain of:

Ismaeel ibn Ayyaash → Jafar ibn Hayyaan al-Utaaridi → al-Hasan → the Prophet (peace be upon him)[2]

Abdul Razzaaq has something similar from Mamar from Qataadah from the Prophet (peace be upon him).[3]

This narration differs from the other narrations in that it makes the ruling seem general, applying to all of mankind. The previous narrations indicates that the ruling is something special for the Nation of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Indeed, there is other evidence that supports this.

The first chain contains Jafar ibn Hayyaan al-Utaaridi who was definitely a trustworthy narrator. Ismaaeel ibn Ayyash is described by ibn Hajr as, “Honest in the narrations from the people of his land; confused in his other narrations.”[4] Ismaeel was from Greater Syria while Jafar was from Basra. Hence, it would not be surprising if Ismaaeel did not get the wording exactly correct of this hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

The second chain contains Mamar who was a well-known, trustworthy narrator. He was a close student of Qataadah from the time he was young. Hence, there is no fear that the chain is broken there. Qataadah himself was a great scholar of hadith with a great memory. However, the chain between Qataadah and the Prophet (peace be upon him) is definitely broken, since

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[1] This is assuming that the narration containing the word لي in the published edition is correct and not a typographical error. One published edition of al-Tahaawi’s *Sharh Maani al-Athaar* used here is an old work (Cairo: Matbaah al-Anwaar al-Muhammidyyah, no date) and it has numerous errors. For example, in the chain for this hadith (vol. 3, p. 95), al-Rabee’s name is misspelled as Rabee. A more recent publication of the same work (Beirut: Aalim al-Kitaab, 1994, vol. 3, p. 95) has the same error concerning al-Rabee’s name. (Hence, the source of that mistake could be some of the manuscripts of al-Tahaawi’s work.) Such a mistake can be critical as Rabee ibn Sulaimaan, in general, would be considered a different person from al-Rabee ibn Sulaimaan. In fact, there was a narrator with the name Rabee ibn Sulaimaan, and he was a weak narrator. However, from the other personalities mentioned in the chain, it is clear to this author that the weak narrator Rabee is not the narrator in al-Tahaawi’s chain. [For information about the weak narrator Rabee ibn Sulaimaan, see ibn Adi, vol. 3, p. 997; al-Uqaili, vol. 2, p. 54; Ahmad ibn Shuaib al-Nasaai, *Al-Dhuafaa wa al-Matrukoon* in Abdul Azeez al-Seerwaan, *Al-Majmoo fi al-Dhuafaa wa al-Matrookeen* (Beirut: Daar al-Qalam, 1985), p. 102.]

[2] Saeed ibn Mansoor, vol. 1, p. 279.

[3] Abdul Razaaq al-Sanaani, vol. 6, p. 410.

[4] Cf., Maroof and al-Arnaoot, vol. 1, p. 138.

Qataadah was a Follower and not a Companion. Furthermore, one of the problems with Qataadah is that he was "like one who gathers wood at night" not being able to recognize good wood from bad wood. In other words, he used to take hadith from most everyone without distinguishing the good narrators were from the poor ones.[1] Thus, his reports in which his source is unstated cannot be considered acceptable. In this particular case, it means that his slightly different narration from the others cannot be considered an acceptable narration.

Conclusions about the Grading and Wording of the Hadith

Based on the complete chain through ibn Abbaas, the *mursal* reports of al-Hasan and the *mursal* report from Ataa, it is concluded that this is a *sahih* hadith. The scholars who have approved of this hadith include the following: ibn Hibbaan,[2] al-Haakim, al-Dhahabi,[3] ibn Katheer,[4] al-Sakhaawi,[5] al-Suyooti,[6] al-Haitami,[7] al-Wazeer al-Yamaani,[8] al-Albaani,[9] Shuaib al-Arnaoot,[10] ibn Muhammad,[11] and al-Hilaali.[12]

However, none of those scholars attempted to determine the exact or correct wording of the hadith. It is clear that the narrations on the authority of al-Auzaai from Ataa are all of one and the same hadith. Either the word لي ("for my sake") forms part of that hadith or it does not.

The conclusion here— and Allah knows best— is that the word لي does not form part of the hadith. It must be considered *shaadh*.[13] At least seven narrators have narrated this hadith from Al-Rabee ibn Sulaiman without the word لي in it while only two reported it from him with that word as part of the hadith. Furthermore, Bahr ibn Nadhr, a trustworthy narrator, is in agreement with al-Rabee in narrating this hadith from Bishr without the word لي in it. In addition, the *mursal* report from Ataa, which is most likely the same hadith with the same chain, also does not have this word in it. Finally, the *mursal* reports from al-Hasan that have good chains also do not have this word in it. Hence, it must be concluded that the inclusion of this word in this particular hadith is a mistake. Most likely the source of the mistake is al-Rabee himself who, although unquestionably a trustworthy narrator, was also characterized at one time as having some great forgetfulness in his reports.[1]

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[1] Cf., ibn Hajr, *Tahdheeb*, vol. 3, p. 429.

[2] See al-Faarisi, vol. 16, p. 202.

[3] Al-Haakim, vol. 2, p. 198.

[4] Ismaaeel ibn Katheer, *Tuhfah al-Taalib bi-Marifah Ahaadeeth Mukhtasar ibn al-Haajib* (Makkah: Daar al-Hiraa, 1406 A.H.), pp. 271-274.

[5] al-Sakhaawi, pp. 369-371.

[6] al-Suyooti, *Al-Ashbaah wa al-Nadhaair*, p. 206.

[7] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 274. He, like al-Nawawi, concluded that it is *hasan*.

[8] Muhammad al-Wazeer al-Yamaani, *Al-Awaasim min al-Qawaasim fi al-Dhabb an Sunnah Abi al-Qaasim* (Beirut: Muassasah al-Risaalah, 1992), vol. 1, pp. 192-196.

[9] Al-Albaani, *Irwaa*, vol. 1, p. 123.

[10] Shuaib al-Arnaoot, footnotes to al-Faarisi, vol. 16, pp. 203-203.

[11] Ibn Muhammad, pp. 215-221.

[12] Al-Hilaali, *Iqaadh*, pp. 528-529.

[13] *Shaadh* is where trustworthy reporters report something in such a way that it contradicts what is proven through stronger means. Some may argue that this is a case of *ziyaadat-ul-thiqa*, wherein a trustworthy narrator has narrated additional information when compared to the other narrators. In general, such additional information is considered acceptable as long as it does not negate the meaning of what the others have narrated. That is the general principle but like all other general principles, it is only applied if other evidence does not lead one to conclude something else. This is why Ahmad Shaakir wrote, "Yes, [it is possible] that the researcher notes evidence and strong circumstantial points that leads him to conclude that the additional words from the trustworthy narrator are *shaadh* and mistaken. However, that occurs so rarely that one cannot build a general principle upon it." [See Ahmad Shaakir, *al-Baath al-Hatheeth Sharh Ikhtisaar Uloom al-Hadeeth* (Damascus: Daar al-Faihaa, 1994), p. 71.] In other words, there must be some limit to the acceptability of additional words from trustworthy narrators. In this

The correct wording or meaning of this hadith is as follows:

إِنَّ اللّٰهَ تَجَاوَزَ عَنْ أُمَّتِي الخَطَأَ وَالنِّسْيَانَ وَمَا اسْتُكْرِهُوا عَلَيْهِ

"Allah has pardoned for my Nation [what is done] by mistake, out of forgetfulness or under duress."[2] And Allah alone knows best.

Important General Observations [3]

After the above lengthy discussion to determine both the authenticity of this hadith as well as its exact wording, a few general observations need to made.

First, this hadith exemplifies the importance of the sciences of hadith as a whole. The scholars of hadith determine whether or not a hadith is authentic or acceptable. However, their job must be more detailed than that. It is also their goal to determine as closely as possible the exact wording of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Determining the exact wording of the hadith to the best of one's ability is done for two important reasons. One is to avoid ascribing anything to the Prophet (peace be upon him) that cannot be proved the Prophet (peace be upon

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particular case, those who narrated the additional wording, "for my sake," are greatly outnumbered by those who do not narrate that additional wording, both with respect to the same chain through al-Rabee ibn Sulaimaan and Bishr or with respect to how others narrated this hadith, such as the *mursal* reports from al-Hasan and Ata. Hence, again, the conclusion is that the additional wording, "for my sake" must be considered *shaadh*. Allah knows best. For more on the question of when to accept and when to reject additional text or information from trustworthy narrators, see Abdul Majeed al-Soosuwah, *Minhaj al-Taufeeq wa al-Tarjeeh bain Mukhtalaf al-Hadeeth wa Atharuhu fi al-Fiqh al-Islaami* (Amman: Daar al-Nafaais, 1997), pp. 185-188.

[1] See ibn Hajr, *Tahdheeb* (Muassasat al-Risaalah), vol. 1, p. 593.

[2] Al-Haitami (*Fath*, p. 274) also offers a linguistic argument for why this should be considered the correct wording.

[3] These comments are more related to the sciences and study of hadith.

him) actually said.[1] If the scholars of hadith have no evidence that will lead them to believe that the Prophet (peace be upon him) made a specific statement, they cannot then attribute that statement to the Prophet (peace be upon him). In doing so, they would be committing a grave sin by claiming the Prophet (peace be upon him) had said something that they do not have evidence to support.

A second important reason is that once the wording of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is determined, then that wording can be studied to derive as many lessons and rulings as possible. If the proper wording is not first determined, then the conclusions drawn from such a hadith may be erroneous.

The importance of this aspect can be seen in this particular hadith. Many of the commentators on this hadith stressed the word لي ("for me") that this author concludes is not part of the hadith. For example, al-Sindi's commentary on this hadith is one of his shortest on al-Nawawi's collection, being only six lines. Besides the text of the hadith itself, half of his commentary is as follows,

> "Verily Allah" who gave me [the Prophet (peace be upon him)] what He gave to no one else of special miracles "pardons" out of honor for me... They will not be held responsible for those acts as a grace from Him and out of honor and esteem for His beloved Muhammad (peace be upon him).[2]

Another example is Al-Baitaar who wrote,

> The word لي ("for my sake") means, "due to me, to give respect to my affair and raise my status." For that reason, Muslims should increase their supplications for the Prophet (peace be upon him) and ask for him to be given the place of intercession and bounties and the highest rank... We find that the sin of mistake, forgetfulness and compulsion have been raised from the Nation of Muhammad because of him as, for the previous peoples, it was not raised from them.[3]

Finally, in one of the few English commentaries on al-Nawawi's collection, Abbasi wrote, based on this word that does not seem to belong in this hadith, "This clearly shows the Prophet as the means of intercession between Allah and Man."[4]

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[1] This is the approach of scholars of hadith even if the change in wording does not have any significant implication for the meaning of the hadith. For example, the hadith with the words, "Seeking knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim," is considered *hasan* while the hadith with the words "Seeking knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim, male and female," is considered weak. See al-Albani's footnotes to al-Tabreezi, vol. 1, p. 76, fn. 2.

[2] Al-Sindi, *Sharh al-Arbaeen*, p. 116.

[3] Al-Baitaar, pp. 244-245.

[4] Abbasi, p. 209. The obvious problem with what he wrote is that it is very vague and can be interpreted in ways that contradict the *shareeah*.

This discussion is not meant to imply that the Prophet (peace be upon him) could not have been deserving of such an honor. But one aspect that distinguishes Islam from the deviated ways of Judaism and Christianity is that it gives the Prophet (peace be upon him) the exact status he deserves, without over exaggerating his place like the Christians have done with respect to Jesus (peace be upon him) or bringing him down to the level of a common, sinning man like the Jews have done to previous prophets (peace be upon them all). This lack of deviation can only be guaranteed by sticking to what is verified in the Quran and the authentic hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him).[1]

Third, this example points out the importance of studying the supporting evidence used by the scholar of hadith. In general, when a scholar of hadith refers to another hadith as supporting evidence, it will have virtually the same meaning as the hadith under discussion but with a different chain of narrators. Sometimes, though, the scholar might mistakenly refer to a hadith as supporting evidence while, in reality, it is not supporting evidence for the hadith under discussion. Again, this particular hadith offers an example of this potential problem. For this particular hadith, ibn Muhammad[2] and others referred to the following hadith from *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Muslim* as supporting evidence:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَجَاوَزَ لِي عَنْ أُمَّتِي مَا وَسْوَسَتْ بِهِ صُدُورُهَا مَا لَمْ تَعْمَلْ أَوْ تَكَلَّمْ

“Verily, Allah has pardoned, for my sake, for my Nation what is whispered to them in their souls as long as they do not act or speak about [those thoughts].” Besides the first couple of words of the hadith being the same, there is virtually no resemblance between this hadith and the hadith quoted by al-Nawawi. There is no mention of mistake, forgetfulness or coercion in that supposed "supporting evidence".

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[1] This is not simply a theoretical point. There is no question that both forms of deviation have appeared among Muslims. Many Sufis, for example, have raised the Prophet (peace be upon him) to a status much greater than can be supported by the Quran and sunnah. Some of them even pray to his grave and claim that he is able to rescue them when they are in difficulty. Modernist Muslims have taken the opposite approach. In many cases, they treat the Prophet (peace be upon him) like he was a normal human being living in a certain environment and under certain cultural conditions— as if he did not receive any revelation whatsoever. Hence, they are quick to reject many of the Prophet’s statements if their intellect does not accept such statements. Again, the only way to be safe from any such deviations is to afford the Prophet (peace be upon him) the status that he is given in the Quran and authentic hadith without adding anything to it or reducing anything from it.

[2] Ibn Muhammad, p. 220. With respect to the hadith quoted above from *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*, ibn Muhammad presented it in its entirety. Hence, the reader can determine that it is not relevant as supporting evidence for the hadith in question. However, on p. 215, ibn Muhammad states that ibn Adi recorded the same hadith as al-Nawawi and he only gives the chain for it. In reality, though, that supporting evidence was not the hadith that al-Nawawi quoted but it was another version of the above referred to hadith from *al-Bukhari* and *Muslim.* In that case, without checking the original source, the reader may be misled into thinking that the same hadith had been recorded by ibn Adi with the chain that ibn Muhammad mentioned.

Fourth, the study of this hadith also highlighted the importance of studying particular narrators in detail and not relying on general, one-word statements about them. Some people in the field of hadith today sometimes rely solely on ibn Hajr's very important and excellent *Taqreeb al-Tahdheeb.*[1] However, that work does not always give the researcher enough detailed information about the narrator.[2] Furthermore, sometimes upon closer inspection, ibn Hajr's conclusions do not always seem strong and sometimes contradict other information that ibn Hajr himself gave about the narrator in his *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb.*[3]

Three examples of this nature have already been noted in the above discussion. (They were Hishaam ibn Hasaan, Ayyoob ibn Suwaid and Shahr ibn Haushab.)

General Comments About the Hadith

This hadith is extremely important to the topic of personal responsibility. In the way that it is understood by some, it has ramifications for virtually every area of *fiqh*. It demonstrates that Allah does not consider people sinful when their actions are not representative of their intentions. In general, a sin is something done against the *shareeah*, knowingly and willingly.

Al-Haitami argued that this hadith spans the entire gamut of human action. By its stated meaning, it shows that man is not responsible for what he does out of forgetfulness, mistake or coercion. By implication, then, it means that man is responsible for everything else that he does. Hence, it covers all of the acts of the *shareeah.*[1]

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[1] Ibn Hajr's biographical dictionary *Taqreeb al-Tahdheeb* is a very useful and important reference. In it, ibn Hajr gives a very brief description of the narrators of the famous "six books". He states in which book a particular narrator may be found. He gives some information as to which historic category the narrator belongs. And he also gives a one or two word description of the grade of the narrator, for example, "trustworthy," "weak," "acceptable [if supported by others]" and so forth.

[2] A classic example of this nature is the case of Saeed ibn al-Basheer. Ibn Hajr's *Taqreeb* simply mentions that he is weak. Based on that, one may raise his hadith with supporting evidence. A modern day scholar did such that with respect to a hadith that he quoted on the authority of Qataadah. Had that scholar checked other works, like *Tahdheeb al-Kamaal*, he would have found that, in particular, Saeed's narrations from Qataadah are not accepted as he reports strange and unsupported reports from him. For more on this point, see this author's "Well-Known but Non-Authentic Hadith and Stories (VI)" *Al-Basheer* (vol. 8, no. 2, July-August 1994), pp. 3-4.

[3] Ibn Hajr's *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb* is basically the source for *Taqreeb al-Tahdheeb*. Ibn Hajr greatly condensed the information in *Tahdheeb* and, instead of quoting different scholars about a particular narrator as found in *Tahdheeb*, he simply gave his own conclusion about the narrator in *Taqreeb*. Of course, this author is not the only one or the first one who has noted these problems with *Taqreeb*. This is one of the reasons why Maroof and al-Arnaoot published their critical edition of *Taqreeb*, entitled *Tahreer Taqreeb al-Tahdheeb*. Another important work of a similar nature is Ataa ibn Ahmad, *Imaan al-Nadhar fi Taqreeb ibn Hajr* (Cairo: Maktaba al-Ilm, 1994).

This hadith is also one of the manifestations of the *shareeah*'s removal of hardship from the people. Allah states in the Quran,

وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِى ٱلدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ

"He has not placed upon you in the religion any hardship" (*al-Hajj* 78). To hold a person sinful and completely responsible for acts that he did by mistake, out of forgetfulness or while being coerced would entail a great deal of hardship and difficulty. Ibn Humaid points out that such could reach the level of burdening a person beyond what he can bear which is categorically denied of the *shareeah.*[2] Therefore, the *shareeah* has lessened the burden and held humans free of sin in those cases.

About the Narrator: ibn Abbaas

Ibn Abbaas was discussed in the commentary to Hadith Number 19.

"Allah has pardoned"

This hadith demonstrates the great mercy and compassion that Allah has for the followers of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). No one can force Allah to judge in a particular fashion or decree a particular matter. But this hadith points to Allah's wisdom, justice and mercy.

Al-Haitami stated,

> Pardoning those aspects [that is, the sin of unintentional acts, acts done out of forgetfulness or coercion] is the requirement of wisdom, even though if Allah were to hold one to account for those acts He would be just [since they are the person's acts[3]]. However, the benefit of responsibility and its goal is to distinguish between the obedient one and the sinner, and to destroy the one who is to be destroyed after he received clear guidance and to give real life to the alive on the basis of clear guidance. Any act of obedience or disobedience needs an intention for it to be tied to reward or punishment. The three cases [described in this hadith] are devoid of such intention. The first two cases are clear in and of themselves. As for the

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[1] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 274.

[2] Saalih ibn Humaid, *Raf' al-Haraj fi al-Shareeah al-Islaamiyyah* (Makkah: Umm al-Qura University, 1403 A.H.), p. 214.

[3] For example, among human beings, one person may forget to do something or do something by mistake and another person may not be willing to forgive or overlook what he has done. This is because it is recognized that even if the act was done out or forgetfulness or due to a mistake, it was in fact the person's act and he is sometimes held fully responsible for what he has done.

third case, the intention is from the one doing the coercing and not the coerced himself, he is simply like a tool.[1]

What Exactly Has Been Pardoned?

It is obvious that mistakes, forgetfulness and coercion occur among the Muslim nation. This hadith does not imply that such would not occur among this nation, although some of the narrations of the hadith could give that impression. Important questions that arise are: What exactly has been pardoned? Has the entire act been pardoned including both the sinful nature of the act as well as its legal ruling in this world?[2] Or has just the possible sinful nature been pardoned while the worldly ruling and consequences must still be tended to by the individual involved? If the act performed was a permissible, non-sinful act, is the worldly ruling then considered void or is it enforceable?

In some cases, there are explicit texts from the Quran and sunnah stating what should be done in the case of mistake, forgetfulness or coercion. For example, in the case of mistakenly killing another believer, the Quran has laid down the expiation for that act. Those cases that have been explicitly addressed in other texts are not problematic. One simply follows the specific text related to that case.

The problem arises when no other relevant text exists.[3] In those cases, there is a difference of opinion among the different schools of fiqh as to the understanding and application of this particular hadith. The hadith itself is open to being interpreted as the sinful nature of the act is overlooked and pardoned. It is also open to mean that all of the rulings associated with that act are to be pardoned, as if the act itself never occurred. All scholars seem to agree that the sinful nature of the act has definitely been removed. They differ only with respect to the worldly legal ramifications.[4]

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[1] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, pp. 274-275.

[2] For example, to speak while in prayer is a sin. Its worldly ruling is that it invalidates the prayer. Therefore, the issues in question here are the following: If a person speaks by mistake while in prayer, is he a sinner due to that act? That is the question with respect to the sinful nature of the act. The question with respect to the worldly ruling is: Does the one who speaks in prayer by mistake invalidate his prayer or not?

[3] In some commentaries to this hadith, the impression is given that under each case, one must act according to the relevant evidence. (Such is the approach of Sultaan, p. 345.) However, that is simply begging the question. The question is: If there is no other evidence, does this one hadith constitute enough evidence to say that both the sin and the worldly ruling of the act is overlooked?

[4] In fact, one approach to this hadith is that there is no ambiguity in the hadith and there is no need to assume anything further for the hadith. This is because its wording is clear, even before the coming of the *shareeah*, and its meaning jumps to the person's mind: a person will not be held responsible or punished for anything he does by mistake, out of forgetfulness or while under duress. Hence, it is literally correct and true either linguistically or because of an understanding that already exists among the people. [Cf., Muhammad ibn al-Najaar, *Sharh al-Kaukab al-Muneer* (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ubaikaan, 1993), vol. 3, p. 202.] However, that is not the most common approach to understanding this hadith.

The Concept of *Umoom al-Muqtadhaa*.

Before beginning the discussion of the different approaches to the above issue, a brief discourse to introduce the term *umoom al-muqtadhaa* is needed. In the commentary to Hadith #1, the concepts of *idhmaar* and *taqdeer* were introduced. This question is related to those concepts.

The wording of the hadith here requires that something be assumed in order to give it a complete meaning. This leads to the question of how much can be assumed. This is the topic in Islamic legal theory known as عموم المقتضى *umoom al-muqtadhaa* or the generality or number of required assumption(s). This discussion revolves around one question, "How general or encompassing can one make one's required assumption when the text itself does not provide all of the essential components?" More precisely stated the issue is as follows: Suppose there are four possible assumptions that could be made concerning what is not stated in a text. Can one assume all four of those possibilities or can one assume only one of them? If a scholar accepts the notion of *umoom al-muqtadhaa*, he will allow more than one assumption to be made, up to every assumption possible. If a scholar does not accept that notion, he will only allow one assumption or the minimum needed assumption.

The Hanafi Approach.[1] In general, the Hanafis take the strictest approach, since they reject the application of *umoom al-muqtadhaa.* They argue that all agree that the sinful nature is pardoned. They then argue that to assume any further implication is not permissible. The principle is to assume as little as possible for, in essence, one is assuming only out of necessity and, in all cases of necessity, one must opt for the minimum needed to fulfill one's necessity. Since the expression can have meaning without assuming more, it is not permissible to assume more.[2] Furthermore, one can assume that the word or phrase means one thing but one cannot assume that it means more than one thing. That is to say, one can assume that the hadith is in reference to the sinful nature or to the worldly ruling but one cannot assume that it is in reference to both.

Therefore, from the Hanafi perspective, unless there is specific evidence regarding a particular issue, it is understood that this hadith only implies that the sin of the act is pardoned and not the worldly consequences of the act.

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[1] In the field of Islamic legal theory, due to historical developments, many topics are discussed from the point of view of the Hanafis (also known as the jurists or *fuqahaa*) vis-a-vis the point of view of the Shafi'ees/Maalikis/Hanbalis (also known as the "scholastic dialecticians" or *mutakallimoon*). For the sake of brevity, in the above analysis, the emphasis will be on the Hanafi perspective vis-a-vis the Shafi'ee perspective.

[2] Cf., Abu Bakr Muhammad al-Sarakhsi, *Usool al-Sarakhsi* (Daar al-Kitaab al-Arabi, 1372 A.H.), vol. 1, pp. 248-254.

The Approach of the *Mutakallimoon* (Shafi'ees, Malikis and Hanbalis). First there is the general question of whether or not the *mutakallimoon* accept the concept of *umoom al-muqtadhaa*. Although a detailed discussion of that question is beyond the scope of this work, it must be commented upon here to some extent.

Those who Reject the Concept of *Umoom al-Muqtadhaa*. Many writers state that it is the Shafi'ee approach or the opinion of al-Shafi'ee himself to accept *umoom al-muqtadhaa*. Such has been attributed to them by al-Turki,[1] al-Duraini[2] and others.

The Shafi'ee scholar al-Alaai says that one can find evidence in which al-Shafi'ee himself accepted the concept and other evidence wherein he rejected it.[3] However, concerning the example in which he supposedly accepted the concept, al-Shafi'ee himself, in his dictation, seemed to reject *umoom al-muqtadhaa* while accepting only analogy in a similar case.[4] Al-Khinn also noted that he had never seen al-Shafi'ee himself actually invoke this concept or anything similar to it, although the Hanafi scholars explicitly ascribe it to al-Shafi'ee himself.[5]

Furthermore, many of the leading Shafi'ee legal theorists throughout the years have also rejected *umoom al-muqtadhaa*. For example, al-Ghazzaali and al-Amidi[6], also hold the same views as the Hanafis on this point. Al-Ghazzaali argues that generality is a characteristic of terms only and cannot be a characteristic of the "meaning" of an expression. Al-Raazi also rejects the idea of *umoom al-muqtadhaa* on the basis that assuming one matter is all that is needed and all that can be resorted to in the case of necessity.[7] Other Shafi'ee scholars of the same opinion include al-Bannaani and Abdul Rahmaan al-Sherbeeni.[8]

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[1] Abdullah al-Turki, *Asbaab Ikhtilaaf al-Fuqahaa* (Riyadh: Maktaba al-Riyaadh al-Hadeethah), p. 163.

[2] Fathi al-Duraini, *al-Manaahij al-Usooliyyah fi al-Ijtihaad bi-Rai fi al-Tashree al-Islami* (Damascus: Daar al-Rasheed, 1976), vol. 1, p. 373,

[3] Khaleel al-Alaai, *Talqeeh al-Fuhoom fi Tanqeeh Siyagh al-Umoom* (published by Abdullah Ali-Shaikh, 1983), p. 417.

[4] See Abu Bakr al-Hisni, *Kitaab al-Qawaaid* (Riyadh: Maktaba al-Rushd, 1997), vol. 2, p. 271.

[5] Mustafa al-Khinn, *Athar al-Ikhtilaaf fi al-Qawaaid al-Usooliyyah fi Ikhtfilaaf al-Fuqahaa* (Beirut: Muassasah al-Risaalah, 1996), p. 155.

[6] Al-Amidi actually seems to be unclear on this point as sometimes he seems to reject it while at other times he seems to accept it.

[7] Cf., Abu Haamid Muhammad al-Ghazzaali, *al-Mustasfa min Ilm al-Usool* (Daar Saadir), vol. 2, p. 61; Saif al-Deen Ali al-Amidi, *al-Ihkaam fi Usool al-Ahkaam* (Beirut: Daar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1983), vol. 2, pp. 363-364; Fakhr al-Deen al-Raazi, *al-Mahsool fi Ilm al-Usool* (Riyadh: Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University, 1979), vol. 1, part 2, pp. 625-626.

[8] Al-Allaamah al-Bannaani, *Haashiyyah al-Bannaani ala Sharh al-Jalaal Shams al-Deen Muhammad al-Muhala ala Matn Jama al-Jawaami lil-Imaam Taaj al-Deen Abdul Wahaab al-Subkee (wa bi-Haamishi: Taqreeraat al-Sharbeeni* (Beirut: Daar al-Fikr, 1982), vol. 1, p. 402.

Those who Accept the Concept of *Umoom al-Muqtadhaa.* Some Shafi'ee scholars do explicitly accept the concept and seem to be willing to apply it to the hadith under discussion here, "Allah has pardoned..." Al-Hisni argues in its favor.[1] One of their arguments is that when a statement is in need of assuming some non-stated components, one cannot state that one assumption is stronger than the other. Hence, if all are possible, all such assumptions must be made as otherwise one is making a conclusion without overriding evidence for it.[2] Another argument is that the problem of assuming too much is considered a lesser problem than too much vagueness.[3]

Abu al-Khattaab, the Hanbali, presents one of the strongest arguments in favor of accepting *umoom al-muqtadhaa* by referring to this hadith, "Allah has pardoned..." He says that if this hadith is in reference to the sin only, there would be nothing special about this Nation of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). He states that in all of the previous laws the one who forgot was not held considered sinful.[4] That argument would be a very strong argument if there was definite proof that all the previous laws did not consider such people sinful.[5]

Others who accept the concept and application of *umoom al-muqtadhaa*[6] include "the family of Taimiya"[7], ibn Qudaama and Abdul Qaadir ibn Badraan of the Hanbalis.[8]

In sum, from this perspective, unless there is specific evidence regarding a particular issue, it is understood that this hadith implies that both the sin of the act is pardoned as well as some of the consequences related to this world.

The implications of these two approaches to *umoom al-muqtadhaa* and their implications for this particular hadith are shown in Figure 39.5.

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[1] Al-Hisni, vol. 2, p. 272.

[2] With respect to the particular hadith under discussion here, "Allah has pardoned for my Nation [what is done] mistakenly, out of forgetfulness or under duress," most of the texts on Islamic legal theory reproduce it with the wording, "Allah has removed from my nation..." Based on that wording, the Shafi'ee scholars also argue that the complete removal of consequences in both this life and the Hereafter is much closer to the wording of hadith and, therefore, it is what must be understood from the hadith. Cf., al-Khinn, p. 155.

[3] Cf., al-Hisni, vol. 2, p. 272.

[4] Abu al-Khataab was quoted in Muwafaq al-Deen Abdullah ibn Qudaamah, *Raudhah al-Naadhir wa Junnah al-Munaadhir* (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Maarif, 1984), vol. 2, p. 51.

[5] The hadith to be presented later concerning the revelation of the last three verses of *soorah al-Baqara* seems to contradict the argument presented by Abu al-Khataab.

[6] Often times in the discussion of the concept of *umoom al-muqtadhaa* there is an explicit mention of this hadith, "Allah has pardoned..."

[7] "The family of Taimiya" is in reference to Majid al-Deen Abdul Salaam, Shihaab al-Deen Abdul Haleem and Taqi al-Deen Ahmad ibn Taimiya. For their discussion of this point, see Shihaab al-Deen Abu al-Abbaas al-Hanbali, *al-Musawwadah fi Usool al-Fiqh* (Beirut: Daar al-Kitaab al-Arabi, n.d.), pp. 90-96.

[8] Cf., Abdul Qaadir ibn Badraan, *Nuzhat al-Khaatir al-Maatir [Sharh Raudhat al-Naadhir wa Junnah al-Munaadhir]*, (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Maarif, 1984), vol. 2, pp. 50-52.

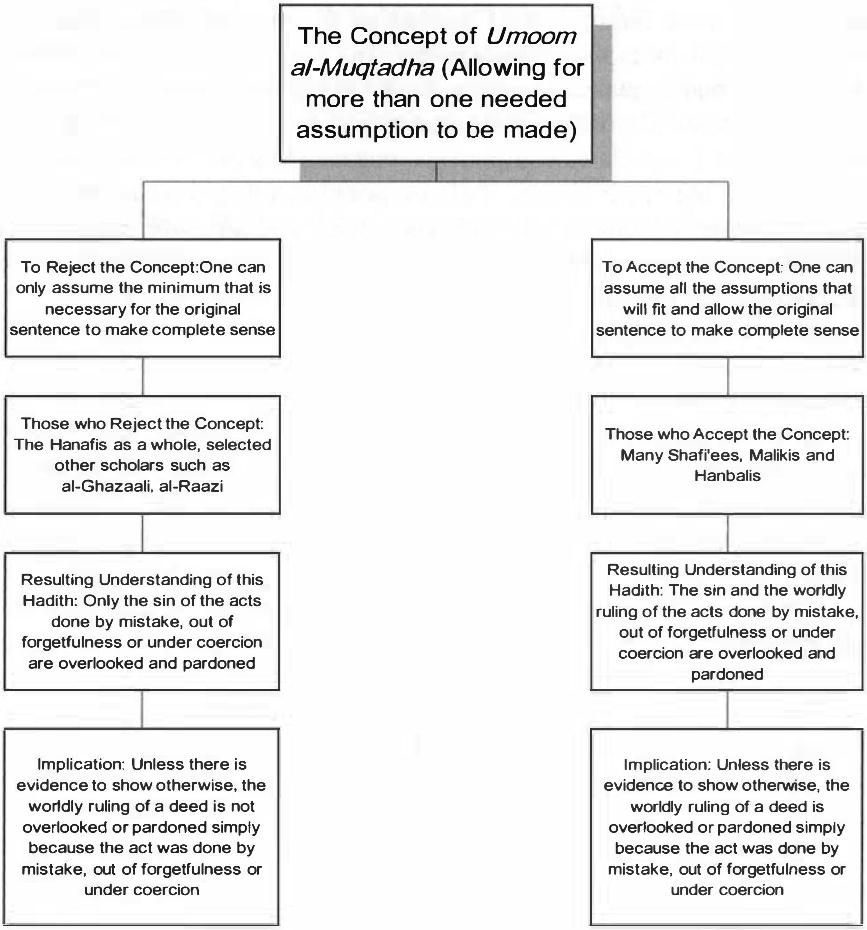
The Concept of *Umoom al-Muqtadha* (Allowing for more than one needed assumption to be made)
To Reject the Concept:One can only assume the minimum that is necessary for the original sentence to make complete sense
Those who Reject the Concept: The Hanafis as a whole, selected other scholars such as al-Ghazaali, al-Raazi
Resulting Understanding of this Hadith: Only the sin of the acts done by mistake, out of forgetfulness or under coercion are overlooked and pardoned
Implication: Unless there is evidence to show otherwise, the worldly ruling of a deed is not overlooked or pardoned simply because the act was done by mistake, out of forgetfulness or under coercion
To Accept the Concept: One can assume all the assumptions that will fit and allow the original sentence to make complete sense
Those who Accept the Concept: Many Shafi'ees, Malikis and Hanbalis
Resulting Understanding of this Hadith: The sin and the worldly ruling of the acts done by mistake, out of forgetfulness or under coercion are overlooked and pardoned
Implication: Unless there is evidence to show otherwise, the worldly ruling of a deed is overlooked or pardoned simply because the act was done by mistake, out of forgetfulness or under coercion

Figure 39.5 The Results and Implications of Accepting and Applying *Umoom al-Muqtadhaa*

Specific Statements Concerning this Particular Hadith. In his commentary to this hadith, the Shafi'ee al-Haitami has aptly followed the approach that is representative of many Shafi'ees:

> [The words of the hadith] could imply either the ruling of the deed or its sin or both of them together. The last option is most apparent. This is because there is no evidence to make any of the other views stronger. So the hadith must be left as implying

> both of them and to specifying it to mean only the second [that is, just the sin] is itself in need of evidence. What we stated is not contradicted by the fact that the mistaken person must pay wealth or blood money or that the one who prayed out of forgetfulness while not in a state of ablution or while having an impurity must repeat his prayer... because those issues are beyond the realm of this hadith due to separate evidences that govern those cases. Hence, the hadith applies to both [the sin and worldly] ruling unless there is evidence to show otherwise.[1]

Ibn Hajr, another Shafi'ee scholar, also stated in *Fath al-Baari* that the hadith, "Allah has pardoned..." refers to both the ruling and the sin, as opposed to those who restrict it only to the sin.[2]

It seems, though, that most scholars would hesitate in going that far with this particular hadith. For example, Ibn Rajab, a Hanbali scholar, is clearly in agreement with the Hanafis with respect to this particular hadith. He wrote,

> The most apparent view— and Allah knows best— is that those who forget or are mistaken are forgiven in the sense that there is no sin upon them. This is because sin is the result of intention and purpose. The one who forgets and the mistaken person have no purpose in that act, so there is no sin upon them. But as for removing the ruling from them, that is not what is meant by these texts. For those matters, to deny or affirm the ruling, one must seek other evidence.[3]

Al-Nawawi, a Shafi'ee, also agrees with ibn Rajab's approach.[4] Furthermore, al-Bugha and Mistu, who are also Shafi'ees, explicitly agree with the interpretation of ibn Rajab.[5] Al-Zarkashi, one of the leading Shafi'ee legal theorists, wrote,

> The sin of a mistake is removed. That is what is meant by the Prophet's (peace be upon him) words, "Raised from my Nation are mistakes and forgetfulness." As for the ruling concerning matters related to the rights of humans, the one who acts intentionally and the one who is mistaken are exactly alike. The same is also true for some of the "rights of Allah"...[6]

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[1] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 274.
[2] Quoted in al-Khinn, p. 158.
[3] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 369.
[4] Al-Nawawi, *Sharh al-Arbaeen*, p. 145.
[5] See al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 331.
[6] al-Zarkashi, vol. 2, 122.

Indeed, ibn al-Najaar and Majid al-Deen ibn Taimiya state that this is the understanding of the majority of the Shafi'ees.[1]

It should be noted that this difference of opinion among the legal theorists is not simply a theoretical matter. Indeed, it has numerous practical implications and resultant differences of opinion. One example of that nature shall be presented later when the question of the one who speaks during the prayer out of forgetfulness is discussed.

Another example is the question of a man having been coerced or forced to state a divorce of his wife. According to the Shafi'ees and Malikis, such a divorce is not valid or, in essence, has not occurred. One of the proofs they use for their position is this hadith, "Allah has pardoned for my Nation [what is done] mistakenly, out of forgetfulness or under duress." In other words, according to them, the man who stated those words of divorce is neither held accountable for that action in the Hereafter nor is he accountable for it in this life. Hence, the divorce, in fact, never happened.

According to the Hanafis, however, that argument is not valid. True, the man will face no consequences for his action in the Hereafter. The worldly ruling, though, is that the divorce did take effect and that the hadith under discussion here is irrelevant because it is only concerned with what will occur in the Hereafter. They, on the other hand, argue on the basis of an analogy between the one who is coerced to divorce his wife and the one who divorces his wife in jest. The divorce said in jest is a valid and enforced divorce, as is clear in a hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him). However, the person who said the divorce in jest did not actual truly intend to divorce his wife. He is, then, akin to the one who is coerced to divorce his wife. Since the divorce said in jest is valid, the divorced said under duress must also be valid.[2]

Different Types of Rights

Perhaps the answer to the above question, "Given no other evidence, does this hadith imply that both the sin and worldly ruling of an are overlooked or just the sin?" may be answered by viewing the question from a different angle. In this approach, one emphasizes the type of right involved. Based on the type of right, one may say that just the sin or both the sin and worldly ruling are overlooked.

In Islamic law, there are different types of rights. There are the rights of Allah upon His servants, such as prayers, fasting and so forth. With respect to the deeds that violate those rights, a general principle is that if the person has faith, any act he performs without complete intention or which he cannot perform due to incapability are forgiven and pardoned by Allah. This is, of course, related to Allah's encompassing and great mercy and forgiveness.

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[1] Ibn al-Najaar, vol. 3, p. 198; Shihaab al-Deen al-Hanbali, p. 91. In many places in *al-Musawwadah* it states that such is the opinion of some of the Shafi'ees.

[2] See Saalih, *Tafseer al-Nusoos*, vol. 1, pp. 568-579. Saalih himself concludes that the opinion of the majority (Shafi'ees, Malikis and Hanbalis) is the stronger opinion on this question as they have ample evidence to support their viewpoint (in addition to the hadith under discussion here).

There are other rights that are termed, "the rights of Allah," but in reality they are referring to the rights of the community as a whole as opposed to the rights of the individual. The general principle is that these rights are not to be violated. However, if they are violated by mistake or something similar to that, they may be overlooked to some extent depending on the exact situation.[1] Examples of these types of rights are the prescribed punishments, such as the punishment for adultery and theft. These are the "rights of Allah" and no one has the right to lessen those punishments once the conditions for their enactment have been fulfilled.

The last types of rights are the rights of the individuals themselves. Under no circumstances is it allowed for one person to violate the rights of another person. If one person does so, even if Allah does not hold him sinful for his act, he still must undo the wrong that he has done to the other person.[2]

When looked at in this way, there seems to be general agreement among the scholars that the rights of humans cannot be violated even in the case of mistake, forgetfulness or coercion. In other words, if such rights are violated, the worldly ruling is not "overlooked" and there must be some form of compensation done for the personal right that was violated. However, this agreement among the scholars may be based on other evidences, such as the numerous hadith stressing the inviolability of people's lives, wealth and honor. It may also be based on general principles of public welfare which would be at risk if people were not held responsible for the acts they committed due to mistakes or out of forgetfulness.

Also when it comes to the rights of the community, the second category of the "rights of Allah" discussed above, such rights are not completely overlooked when acts are done by mistake, out of forgetfulness or due to coercion. It is true that the legal punishments are not meted out. But that is due to other evidences that demonstrate that in the case of doubt or a questionable aspect, one does not apply the full legal punishments; and mistakes, forgetfulness and coercion are considered doubtful or questionable. Furthermore, since the sin has been removed from the act, there is actually no room to punish the person. The punishment is meant to be for the sin that the person committed.

That leaves only two areas left open for this hadith to have any worldly effect. The first area is the "rights of Allah", such as prayer, fasting and so forth. If a person does an act that would normally invalidate one of these acts of worship but he does it by mistake, out of forgetfulness or due to coercion, does that mean that the act is still considered valid? It seems that those who argue that this hadith also covers the worldly rulings must answer positively, that the act is still valid. The others, the Hanafis and those who accept their interpretation of this hadith, would answer in the negative and say that those acts are invalidated.

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[1] An example of this nature is where a person drinks an alcoholic beverage believing that it was not an alcoholic beverage. Under such circumstances, the person will not be punished for what he drank if he had drank it by mistake or forgetfulness.

[2] An example of this nature would be the consumption of another person's wealth while believing it to be one's own wealth.

But even with respect to the "rights of Allah", the Shafi'ees, such as al-Hisni, do not liberally apply the principle that they derive from this hadith. Note the following conclusions from al-Hisni's work based on the Shafi'ee school:

(i) If a person becomes certain that he performed the prayer in the wrong direction by mistake, there is no sin upon him (based on this hadith) but his prayer is not valid. He must repeat his prayer.

(ii) If a person forgets to make ablution, his prayer is not valid.

(iii) If a person speaks a lot during the prayer out of forgetfulness, his prayer becomes void.

(iv) If a person forgets and performs the act of ablution in the wrong order, then his ablution is not valid and he must repeat his ablution and any prayers he performed based on that ablution.[1]

(v) If someone forgets that he has some impurity on his clothing, then his prayer performed with such impurity on his clothing is not valid.

(vi) If someone has two bowls of water and he believes that one of them has pure water and he makes ablution from it and then later he determines that it was impure, he must repeat his ablution and any prayers he said afterwards.

(vii) If a person gives *zakat* to another person thinking him to be poor but it turns out that he is rich, he has not fulfilled his obligation of zakat and he must still pay the zakat to the poor.[2]

Al-Hisni tries to argue that the proof that one must make up what one has missed by mistake or forgetfulness is based on the hadith,

مَنْ نَسِيَ صَلاةً فَلْيُصَلِّ إِذَا ذَكَرَهَا لا كَفَّارَةَ لَهَا إِلاَّ ذَلِكَ

"Whoever forgets a prayer must pray it when he remembers it. And there is no expiation for it except that." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.) In other words, what he is saying is that this hadith establishes a principle that restricts the application of the hadith, "Allah has pardoned..." And all those cases mentioned above, therefore, are simply analogous cases to the case of the person who has forgotten a prayer.[1]

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[1] Concerning items (iv)-(vii), al-Hisni points out that there is a difference of opinion among the Shafi'ees. In al-Shafi'ee's old opinion (when he was in Iraq), such deeds would have been overlooked. However, in the new school (when al-Shafi'ee was in Egypt) and the correct opinion of the school, such deeds are not overlooked. See al-Hisni, vol. 2, pp. 278-279. This fact leads to the following provocative question: Did al-Shafi'ee change his understanding of this hadith, "Allah has pardoned..." from the time he was in Iraq to the time he was in Egypt? Is it possible that due to discussions with the Hanafis in Iraq he changed from his old view (which was consistent with what is considered the Maliki or Madinan approach) to a new view that says that such deeds are not overlooked and only the sin of those deeds are overlooked? Unfortunately, those questions require some research and are beyond the scope of this particular work.

[2] Al-Hisni, vol. 2, pp. 273-279.

However, that argument is not acceptable. It is not acceptable because *umoom al-muqtadhaa* is considered a textual argument— that is, as if the words were explicitly stated in the hadith[2]— and a textual argument cannot be overruled by an analogy based on another textual argument. In other words, if the concept of *umoom al-muqtadhaa* is accepted for this hadith, "Allah has pardoned...", then the hadith quoted above, "Whoever forgets a prayer must pray it...," provides an exception to the general ruling for the prayer only. But no further analogy may be made on the basis of that particular ruling.

To make this point clearer, here is how it would apply in case (vii) mentioned above: If a person gives his zakat to an undeserving recipient by mistake, on the basis of *umoom al-muqtadhaa* and this hadith, "Allah has pardoned...", one would have to say that he has fulfilled his obligation of zakat and need not repay it to a deserving person. The "worldly ruling" of his mistake is to be overlooked. One cannot argue on the basis of analogy with one who has forgotten his prayer because analogy cannot overrule what is understood to be actually stated in this hadith.

Ironically, all of those Shafi'ee opinions stated above could be considered correct if one argues that there is no *umoom al-muqtadhaa* and that this hadith, "Allah has pardoned...," does not apply to any worldly rulings at all. In this case, one can then argue in all of those issues on the basis of analogy with the hadith, "Whoever forgets a prayer must pray it..."

The second area is the permissible acts that one performs by mistake, out of forgetfulness or due to coercion. Are such acts valid and enforceable or are they considered null and void due to the understanding that this hadith, "Allah has pardoned..." also covers worldly rulings? The Hanafi response to this question is that such are not overlooked as this hadith is irrelevant to them. Those who understand this hadith in its broadest sense would have to argue that such acts are indeed overlooked and considered null and void.

There is another important aspect that needs to be noted here. If it is concluded that this hadith is only in reference to the sinful nature of acts done by mistake, forgetfulness or under duress, then these permissible acts are not related to this hadith. These permissible acts have no sinful nature to them whatsoever. Hence, this hadith has no bearing on them at all.

Once again, even if the concept of *umoom al-muqtadhaa* is rejected, there is ample evidence to demonstrate that statements made out of coercion are not legally binding on the person. From coercion, one can use analogy to apply the same principle to acts done by mistake or out of forgetfulness. For example, Allah says,

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[1] Al-Hisni, vol. 2, pp. 273-274.

[2] See al-Khinn, p. 155.

مَن كَفَرَ بِٱللَّهِ مِنۢ بَعۡدِ إِيمَٰنِهِۦٓ إِلَّا مَنۡ أُكۡرِهَ وَقَلۡبُهُۥ مُطۡمَئِنُّۢ بِٱلۡإِيمَٰنِ
وَلَٰكِن مَّن شَرَحَ بِٱلۡكُفۡرِ صَدۡرٗا فَعَلَيۡهِمۡ غَضَبٞ مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ وَلَهُمۡ عَذَابٌ
عَظِيمٞ

"Whoever disbelieves in Allah after his belief [shall earn the wrath of Allah] except for one who is forced [to renounce his religion] while his heart is secure in faith. But those who [willingly] open their breasts to disbelief, upon them is wrath from Allah, and for them is a great punishment" (*al-Nahl* 106). If statements of unbelief are to be overlooked due to coercion, obviously, statements concerning lesser matters must also be overlooked.[1] Ibn Humaid argues that such a conclusion is most consistent with the general *shareeah* principles of removing hardship and facilitating matters for all.[2]

The above points demonstrate that even those who claim that this hadith applies to both the sin and the ruling of a deed adhere to the following:

(a) The worldly ruling is not pardoned when individual rights are violated.

(b) The worldly ruling is not completely pardoned or overlooked when community rights are violated.

(c) The worldly ruling is not even completely pardoned when the specific rights of Allah (acts of worship) are violated.

Where does that leave this hadith? If one claims that both the sin and the worldly ruling are to be overlooked and pardon, one must then put that into effect with respect to the relevant cases. However, by agreement of the scholars, that does not seem to be done. The only conclusion that one is forced to reach is that the meaning of this hadith is that the sin of such acts is overlooked and pardoned. It does not mean that the worldly ruling of such acts are overlooked or pardoned. When the worldly ruling of such acts are indeed overlooked, it is not due to the understanding of this hadith but it is due to other evidence.

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[1] Ibn al-Qayyim wrote, "If one ponders over the sources of the Law and what they point to, it will be made clear to him that the Lawgiver has discarded any statements whose meanings the speaker did not intend but which have come from him unintentionally, like in the case of the one who is sleeping, has forgotten, is drunk, is ignorant, is under duress or is mistaken." Ibn al-Qayyim, *Ilaam*, vol. 3, p. 107.

[2] Ibn Humaid, p. 249.

General Introduction to the Concept of Legal Capacity

Before continuing with the commentary to this hadith, some general points about legal capacity need to be stated. A person is considered fully legally capable if there are no impediments to his acting in a correct matter. First and foremost, the person must be living, adult/mature, intelligent and sane. As long as a person is sane and mature, he is considered a responsible agent.

However, even when a person is adult and sane, there may be other circumstances that affect his actions. Although he remains a responsible agent and must continue to fulfill his obligations, these other circumstances may make him act in a way that he did not complete intend.

The aspects mentioned by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in this hadith are called, by the legal theorists, "circumstances affecting legal capacity" (عوارض الأهلية). These are defined in the following manner,

> The circumstances affecting the legal capacity are those matters which are not essential to it. They are initially accidental; that is, they are qualities or circumstances which change the commands, such as journey, or destroy the capacity [to fulfill a command], for it prevents the capacity of obligation or capacity of execution from establishment, such as death, sleep, and a fainting fit. In short, *awarid* are those circumstances which are incompatible with legal capacity of man in general, and which are not necessary for him.[1]

As just alluded to, under certain circumstances, a person cannot be held completely liable for his actions although he is living, sane and mature. This is because his actions have occurred without his complete intention and desire or his ability to perform actions has been curtailed due to some circumstances beyond his control. This does not mean that he is free of any responsibility. In many cases, he is still responsible and has to fulfill or make up for those obligations upon him. However, to lessen the burden under such circumstances, the *shareeah* has taken into consideration their situation and, depending on the situation, has laid down laws easing the burden of those who are faced with such constraints.

Such circumstances can be divided into two broad categories. The first category is actions that are not the result of the person's own doing. They are termed, "acts of providence". This category includes "lunacy, infancy, idiocy, forgetfulness, sleep, fainting fit, slavery, illness, menstruation," post-partum hemorrhaging and death.[2]

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[1] Ahmad Hasan, *Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence* (Islamabad: Islamic Research Institute, International Islamic University, 1993), vol. 1, p. 309.

[2] Cf., Hasan, *Principles*, vol. 1, p. 309.

The second category of acts are those that are brought about, in one way or another, by the man's own actions. Man brings about such a situation and man can remove such a situation, by the will and permission of Allah. This can be further subdivided into two categories. The first subcategory is the result of actions by the person himself. This category includes, "ignorance, drunkenness, jest, folly and mistake."[1] The second subcategory is the result of other's actions upon the person. This is the case of coercion or duress.

The *shareeah* makes special allowances for cases wherein a person's complete will or pleasure with the act that he is performing is absent. For example, a person may perform an act because he has few other options albeit he is not pleased with the act that he is performing. This person's acts, as is demonstrated by the hadith under discussion here, will be looked at in a way different from that of a person who performs an act with its complete intention and while being pleased with the act that he is performing.

Since this hadith only mentions the three aspects of forgetfulness, unintentional acts and duress, only those three aspects will be discussed in detail.[2]

"for my Nation"

The narration below from *Sahih Muslim* gives the impression that this grace from Allah is a special bounty for the Nation of Muhammad (peace be upon him)— that is, those people who responded to the call of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). This is in response to their willingness to submit to Allah even in the most difficult of matters.

Imam Muslim recorded in his *Sahih*:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ لَمَّا نَزَلَتْ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ (لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الأَرْضِ وَإِنْ تُبْدُوا مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ يُحَاسِبْكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ فَيَغْفِرُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ) قَالَ فَاشْتَدَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى أَصْحَابِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَأَتَوْا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ثُمَّ بَرَكُوا عَلَى الرُّكَبِ فَقَالُوا أَيْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ كُلِّفْنَا مِنَ الأَعْمَالِ مَا نُطِيقُ الصَّلاةَ وَالصِّيَامَ وَالْجِهَادَ وَالصَّدَقَةَ وَقَدْ أُنْزِلَتْ عَلَيْكَ هَذِهِ الآيَةُ وَلا نُطِيقُهَا قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

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[1] Hasan, *Principles*, vol. 1, p. 309.

[2] For the other topics, the reader may consult the relevant portions of Hasan, *Principles*, vol. 1, pp. 308-383.

أَتُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَقُولُوا كَمَا قَالَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابَيْنِ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا بَلْ قُولُوا سَمِعْنَا
وَأَطَعْنَا غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ
فَلَمَّا اقْتَرَأَهَا الْقَوْمُ ذَلَّتْ بِهَا أَلْسِنَتُهُمْ فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فِي إِثْرِهَا (آمَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْهِ
مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلٌّ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ لا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْ رُسُلِهِ
وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ) فَلَمَّا فَعَلُوا ذَلِكَ نَسَخَهَا اللَّهُ تَعَالَى
فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ (لا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلاَّ وُسْعَهَا لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا
اكْتَسَبَتْ رَبَّنَا لا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِنْ نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا) قَالَ نَعَمْ (رَبَّنَا وَلا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا
إِصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا) قَالَ نَعَمْ (رَبَّنَا وَلا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ)
قَالَ نَعَمْ (وَاعْفُ عَنَّا وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا أَنْتَ مَوْلانَا فَانْصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ)
قَالَ نَعَمْ

Abu Huraira said: When [the following words of the Quran] were revealed, “To Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the Earth and whether you disclose that which is in your mind or conceal it, Allah will call you to account for it. Then He forgives whom He pleases and punishes whom He pleases. And Allah has power over everything” [*al-Baqara* 284], the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) felt it to be very hard and severe. So they came to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and sat down on their knees. They said, “O Messenger of Allah, we have been obligated some duties that were within our power to perform, such as prayer, fasting, jihaad and charity. Then this verse was revealed to you and it is beyond our power to live up to it.” The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, “Do you intend to say what the people of the two books [Jews and Christians] said before you, ‘We hear and disobey’? Instead, you should say, ‘We hear and we obey, [and we seek] Your forgiveness, our Lord, and unto you is the return.’” The people immediately said that and it flowed from their tongues. Then Allah immediately revealed, “The Messenger believes in that which is sent down unto him from his Lord and so do the believers. Each one believes in Allah and His angels and His books and His messengers. They say, ‘We differentiate not between any of His messengers’ and they say, ‘We hear and we obey. [We seek] your forgiveness, our Lord, and unto You is the return’” [*al-Baqara* 285]. When they did that, Allah particularized the [above verse] and the Great, Majestic Allah then revealed, “Allah burdens not any soul beyond what it can bear. For it [is every good] it earns and against it [is every evil] it earns. Our Lord! Punish us not if we forget or make a mistake." [The Prophet (peace be upon him) then said,] "Yes, [it is so]."[1] "Our Lord! Do not lay on us a burden as You did upon those before us." [The Prophet (peace be upon him) again] said, "Yes [it is so]." "Our Lord! Impose not upon us [burdens] which we have not the strength to bear." [The Prophet (peace be upon him) again said,] "Yes [it is so]." "Pardon us and grant us protection and have mercy on us. You are our protector, so grant us victory over the disbelieving people" [*al-Baqara* 286]. He again said, "Yes." (Recorded by Muslim.)

According to al-Bugha and Mistu, among the Tribes of Israel, if they did something wrong out of forgetfulness or if they did something mistakenly, Allah would still hold them to account and punish them for that such an act.[2]

Ibn Katheer mentions this hadith, "Allah has pardoned..." in his discussion of the verse,

وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ وَٱلْأَغْلَٰلَ ٱلَّتِى كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ ۚ

"He [the Prophet (peace be upon him)] releases them [the people of the Book who embrace Islam] from their heavy burdens and the yokes that were upon them" (*al-Araaf* 157).[3] That is to say, it was part of the Prophet's mission to remove those hardships and difficulties that were placed upon the earlier peoples. Part of those hardships, as ibn Katheer understood, was being held completely responsible for what they did out of, for example, forgetfulness and mistake.

Allah knows best, most likely those more stringent and difficult regulations for the previous peoples were due to their own intransigence and refusal to submit willingly to Allah's commands. This is implied in the above hadith where the Prophet (peace be upon him) has warned the Muslims not to be like the earlier peoples who said, "We hear and disobey."

According to al-Sharnoobi, being pardoned for the acts done by mistake or out of forgetfulness is something special for this Nation. That is why Muslims have been taught the above supplication, "Our Lord, punish us not if we forget or make a mistake." This supplication is made as way of seeking the continuance of that great blessing upon this Nation.[4]

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[1] There is actually no narration that explicitly states that it was the Prophet (peace be upon him) who said, "Yes." However, it is understood that even if this came from the Companion who narrated it, he must have received that information from the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself as this is not an area open to personal reasoning.

[2] Al-Bugha and Mistu, pp. 329-330.

[3] Ibn Katheer, *Tafseer*, vol. 2, p. 283.

[4] Al-Sharbooni, p. 82.

"[what is done] mistakenly"

Hasan has given the following definitions for *khata*[1] (mistake) as found in some of the standard references on Islamic legal theory:

> Mistake (*khata`*) is a deed or word which springs forth from a man without his intention as the result of carelessness by his directly pursuing a matter which is other than the one intended by him...
> Mistake (*khata`*) is a deed performed by a man without intending it perfectly[2]...
> Mistake (*khata`*) means that a man aims by his action at an object other than that at which he aims by his negligent conduct.[3]

Hence, in essence, a person performs a deed which he believes is good and proper but it turns out that it is not proper and is not the correct act or not performed in the correct manner In Allah's sight, under such circumstances, the person is not a sinner and his act is pardoned, as this hadith demonstrates.

There are also other proofs that demonstrate that Allah does not hold one to account for the mistakes that he makes. For example, Allah says in the Quran, in a verse mentioned above,

لَا يُكَلِّفُ ٱللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ۚ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا ٱكْتَسَبَتْ ۗ رَبَّنَا
لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَآ إِن نَّسِينَآ أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا ۚ

"Allah does not burden any soul beyond what it can bear. For it is what it gains and against it what it earns. O our Lord, do not hold us to account if we forget or make a mistake" (*al-Baqara* 286). It is recorded in *Sahih Muslim* that Allah responded favorably to this supplication. Allah also says,

وَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ فِيمَآ أَخْطَأْتُم بِهِۦ وَلَٰكِن مَّا تَعَمَّدَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ ۚ
وَكَانَ ٱللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا

"There is no sin on you concerning that in which you made a mistake, but only in regard to what your hearts deliberately intended. And Allah is Ever Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful" (*al-Ahzaab* 5).

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[1] On the other hand, the similar words الخطء, الخطيئة, الخطايا and الخاطىء all imply the intentional doing of something that one should not do or, in other words, a sin. It is important to recognize the difference between the two usages of these words. Cf., Husain al-Jaboori, *Awaarich al-Ahliyyah ind al-Usooliyyeen* (Makkah: Jaamiah Umm al-Qura, 1988), p. 394.

[2] Probably, "completely intending it" would be a better translation for the phrase, يقصد قصدا تاما.

[3] Hasan, *Principles*, vol. 1, p. 360.

Umar ibn al-Khattaab is quoted as saying, "I do not fear mistakes for you but I fear for you what [you do] intentionally."[1]

Al-Hasan al-Basri is reported to have said, "If it were not for what Allah has said about the affair of those two men— meaning David and Solomon— I would have been of the opinion that the judges are destroyed. But Allah has praised one for his deed and the other for his personal reasoning (*ijtihaad*)." He was referring to the following verse of the Quran,

وَدَاوُۥدَ وَسُلَيْمَٰنَ إِذْ يَحْكُمَانِ فِى ٱلْحَرْثِ إِذْ نَفَشَتْ فِيهِ غَنَمُ ٱلْقَوْمِ وَكُنَّا
لِحُكْمِهِمْ شَٰهِدِينَ ﴿٧٨﴾ فَفَهَّمْنَٰهَا سُلَيْمَٰنَ ۚ وَكُلًّا ءَاتَيْنَا حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا ۚ
وَسَخَّرْنَا مَعَ دَاوُۥدَ ٱلْجِبَالَ يُسَبِّحْنَ وَٱلطَّيْرَ ۚ

"And remember David and Solomon when they gave judgment in the case of the field in which the sheep of certain people had pastured at night. And We were witnesses to their judgment. And We made Solomon understand [the case]; and to each of them We gave right judgment and knowledge. And We subjected the mountains and the birds to glorify Our Praises along with David..." (*al-Anbiyaa* 78-79).[2]

A person who is doing an act mistakenly still has the qualities of being living, adult and sane; thus, committing mistakes does not free oneself completely from being a responsible agent. Therefore, none of the *shareeah* obligations are completely dropped from him simply because he has made a mistake. Again, however, he is considered one who was not completely capable of fulfilling his responsibilities at the time of his being mistaken.

Does the Pardoning of Mistakes Include Mistakes Concerning Matters that are Considered Definitive?

In general, all matters can be divided into two broad categories: *qati'ee* (قطعي) or issues that are known in a definitive manner and *dhanni* (ظني) or issues that are known in a probable manner. A definitive (*qati'ee*) matter is a conclusion of a definitive nature. In general, this definitive conclusion is the result of clear and unquestionable evidence. Hence, there is virtually no room for any other plausible opinion.[3] *Dhanni*, as opposed to *qati'ee*, is a conclusion based on the preponderance of the evidence that does not reach the level of certainty. The major difference between *qati'ee* and *dhanni* is the existence of some evidence or quasi-evidence that lends support to an opposing opinion in the case of *dhanni* matters. In the case of *qati'ee* matters, there is no real acceptable evidence or quasi-evidence for any opposing opinion. *Dhanni* matters are open to personal juristic reasoning and, hence, there is more room for difference of opinion concerning them.

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[1] Quoted in ibn Humaid, p. 223.

[2] Al-Hasan al-Basri was quoted in ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 366.

[3] For a survey of different definitions for *qati'ee*, see Saad al-Shathari, *Al-Qata'u wa al-Dhann Ind al-Usooliyeen* (Riyadh: Daar al-Habeeb, 1997), vol. 1, pp. 37-42.

The majority of the scholars accept that fact that mistakes made concerning *dhanni* matters are definitely overlooked and forgiven by Allah.[1] This opinion is partially based on the hadith under discussion here, "Allah has pardoned for my Nation..." It is also based on the following hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him),

إِذَا حَكَمَ الْحَاكِمُ فَاجْتَهَدَ ثُمَّ أَصَابَ فَلَهُ أَجْرَانِ وَإِذَا حَكَمَ فَاجْتَهَدَ ثُمَّ أَخْطَأَ فَلَهُ أَجْرٌ

"If a judge makes a decision by exerting himself and he finds what is correct, he receives two rewards. If he exerts himself and makes a mistake, he gets one reward." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.) This hadith states that even if the person is incorrect, he will still be rewarded for the effort that he made—not to speak of being held sinless for his mistake.

Ibn Taimiya points out that some conditions must be met for this to be true. These are as follows:[2]

(1) The person must have had a sincere intention to follow the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him).

(2) He must have exerted himself to the best of his ability in an effort to determine the truth or correct position on the matter.

(3) His decision must have been based on some evidence of the *shareeah*, even though he may not have been aware that such evidence was not valid or there was stronger evidence against it and so forth.[3]

The most that can be asked of a person is that he intends to follow the truth, he seeks the truth to the best of his ability and he bases his decisions and actions on knowledge. Ibn Taimiya cites the case of a person who knows the command and exhortation to pray but is unaware of the specific prohibition concerning prayers at certain times. When such a person prays at those times—

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[1] There is some difference of opinion concerning this issue but the minority opinion does not have any strong evidence to support its view. There are some scholars who consider every issue to be of a definitive nature and, hence, they leave little room for mistaken views. For more on this point, see al-Shathari, *al-Qati*, vol. 2, pp. 568-575.

[2] Cf., Abdul Majeed al-Mashjee, *Minhaj ibn Taimiya fi Masalah al-Takfeer* (Riyadh: Adhwa al-Salaf, 1997), vol. 1, pp. 233-234.

[3] If a person is shown that his way or conclusion clearly goes against what the Prophet (peace be upon him) taught and the way of the believers and he chooses to oppose what the Prophet (peace be upon him) brought, he may be declared an unbeliever. If he does not exert himself properly to find the truth or if he speaks without knowledge, then he is a sinner. He may even be considered a *faasiq* (evildoer) or it could be the case that his other good deeds outweigh the wrong that he is committing in this particular case. See ibn Taimiya, *Majmoo*, vol. 12, p. 180; al-Mashjee, vol. 2, p. 235.

which is a wrong or mistaken act on his part— he will not be held sinful if he had the right intention and acted based on the knowledge that he had.[1]

The question arises concerning issues of a definitive nature: Is there any excuse for those people who make mistakes in this realm although the evidences concerning them are clear and unquestionable? Are those who make mistakes in this realm considered sinful?

On this point, there are a number of scholars who say that there is no room for mistakes on such issues and that those who do make such mistakes are sinful. For example, the Hanbali legal theorist Abu Yala wrote, "As for the matter that has definitive evidences for it, we know that it is correct, we are definite that the one who disagrees with us on it is wrong, we void his ruling and we rule him to be a sinner."[2] Al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadi also said about such issues, "The one who goes against it is a sinner, *faasiq* (evildoer)."[3]

Al-Shathri has discussed the evidence that those scholars present for their view.[4] In general, their evidence is not very convincing as they deal more with the unbelievers who refuse to accept Islam as opposed to a scholar who has made a mistake concerning a definitive issue within Islam. For example, one of their proofs is the following verse of the Quran,

وَمَن يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ ٱلْإِسْلَـٰمِ دِينًا فَلَن يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِى ٱلْـَٔاخِرَةِ مِنَ ٱلْخَـٰسِرِينَ

"Whoever desires a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted from him and in the Hereafter, he will be from the losers" (*ali-Imraan* 85).

Another view is that if a sincere, Muslim scholar makes a mistake in matters of a definitive nature, he will be forgiven and he is not to be considered sinful. Ibn Hazm and ibn Taimiya ascribe this opinion to the early scholars of Islam and the Imams such as Abu Hanifah, al-Shafi'ee and al-Thauri.[5] The proofs they present for this opinion are numerous and convincing. They include, among others, the following verse mentioned above,

لَا يُكَلِّفُ ٱللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ۚ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا ٱكْتَسَبَتْ ۗ رَبَّنَا

لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَآ إِن نَّسِينَآ أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا ۚ

"Allah does not burden any soul beyond what it can bear. For it is what it gains and against it what it earns. O our Lord, do not hold us to account if we forget or make a mistake" (*al-Baqara* 286). Again, in *Sahih Muslim*, it is stated that

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[1] Cf., ibn Taimiya, *Majmoo*, vol. 20, pp. 30-31; al-Mashjee, vol. 1, p. 234.

[2] Abu Yala al-Faraa, *al-Uddah fi Usool al-Fiqh* (Riyadh: Ahmad al-Mubaarak, ed.), vol. 5, p. 1569.

[3] Quoted in al-Shathree, *al-Qati*, vol. 2, p. 459.

[4] For a more thorough discussion of the evidence for this view, see al-Shathri, *al-Qati*, vol. 2, pp. 458-466.

[5] See al-Shathri, *al-Qati*, vol. 2, p. 469.

Allah has positively responded to this supplication. This verse makes no distinction between mistakes related to *qati'ee* issues or *dhanni* issues.

Another piece of evidence is the hadith being discussed here, "Allah has pardoned for my Nation [what is done] mistakenly, out of forgetfulness or under duress." Again, there is no distinction as to the nature of the mistake.

There is also a hadith recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim in which a man who had not performed good deeds during his lifetime feared Allah's punishment. He told his children to burn his body and scatter his ashes in the ocean after he dies. The reason he did that was that he feared Allah's punishment. Due to that strong fear of Allah, Allah showed mercy to him and forgave his sins. In this incident, the man believed that he could escape Allah's punishment by having his ashes scattered. To believe that Allah has not the power to reconstruct and punish a person simply because he has been burnt and his ashes scattered is a mistake concerning a definitive matter. However, Allah still forgave that person.

On this point, ibn Taimiya wrote,

> Whoever goes against what is confirmed in the Book or the sunnah is either a disbeliever, an evildoer, a sinner— or he could be a believer who exercised his judgment and was wrong and he will be rewarded for exercising his judgment and forgiven for his mistake. That would be the case if the knowledge that would establish the proof against him did not reach him. Allah has said, "We were not inflicting punishment until We sent a messenger" (*al-Israa* 15). However, if the proof is established against him as demonstrated by the Book and the sunnah and he differs from it, then he is to be punished for that, either killed [if he is an apostate] or something less than that.[1]

Elsewhere, ibn Taimiya wrote,

> The early pious people (*al-salaf*) disputed about many of those [definitive] issues. Yet none of them declared the others as having unbelief, evil or sin. Shuraih rejected the reading of the verse, "But I wonder (*ajibtu*) while they mock" (*al-Saaffaat* 12). He said, "Allah does not wonder." When that reached Ibrahim al-Nakhai, he said, "Shuraih was a poet who was overcome by his own knowledge. But Abdullah [ibn Masood] was more knowledgeable than him and he would read, 'I wonder.'" And Aisha disputed with other Companions concerning Muhammad (peace be upon him) seeing his Lord. She said, "Whoever claims that Muhammad saw his Lord has committed a great falsehood against Allah." Even though, we do not say about ibn Abbaas or others who disputed with her

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[1] Ibn Taimiya, *Majmoo*, vol. 1, p. 113.

> on that point that they stated a great lie against Allah. They also disputed about whether the dead could hear the words of the living, whether the dead is punished for the crying of his family over him and so forth...[1]

The conclusion is that Allah's mercy is so great that He even forgives those of the followers of Muhammad (peace be upon him) who commit errors concerning matters of a definitive nature. In addition, a Muslim does not automatically become an apostate, a heretic or even an evildoer (*faasiq*) due to a mistake that he has made, even though the act he performed or statement he made is one of disbelief, intransigence or a heresy. It is only after his mistake has been made evidently clear to him and he then continues to insist on following what clearly goes against the way of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the believers may he be declared an apostate or a heretic.[2]

This does not mean that the door is to be left open to anyone to state any opinion even if it goes against the Quran or sunnah. Allah's forgiveness for those who are mistaken does not mean that one remains silent in the face of the mistakes of others. Instead, one must still advise them and show them their errors based on evidence from the Quran and sunnah. Depending on the nature or gravity of their errors, one may even be forced to go beyond advice, as can be seen in the example of the Companions who were forced to fight each other when they felt that the wrong opinion of the other group was a threat to Islam itself. It does however mean that mistakes in themselves do not necessarily require that a person be condemned in either this life or the Hereafter.

"[what is done] out of forgetfulness"

"Forgetfulness" (*al-nisyaan*) has been defined by the scholars in numerous ways. Hasan has given the following definitions from some of the standard works on Islamic legal theory:

> Ignorance by necessity, and not on account of ailment, of what a person used to know, despite his having knowledge of other things...
> Failure to recall a thing at the time of its need...
> A circumstance which befalls a man without his volition causing loss of remembrance of something.[3]

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[1] Ibn Taimiya, *Majmoo*, vol. 3, pp. 239-240.

[2] This conclusion is of extreme importance today when some Muslims are declaring others disbelievers or heretics although they cannot claim that the proof has been established against those erring Muslims. Indeed, even in *dhanni* issues which are a matter of *ijtihaad*, some Muslims are claiming that others have become heretics or disbelievers. In fact, even greater latitude must be accorded when the mistaken view is based on a *taweel* or interpretation that has some support in the Quran and sunnah. For more on that particular type of case, see al-Mashjee, vol. 1, pp. 239-242. Also see W. al-Umari, pp. 142-147.

[3] Hasan, *Principles*, vol. 1, pp. 314-315.

An aspect that is stressed in the definitions of "forgetfulness" is that it is a temporary situation not caused by disease. It is not, for example, like amnesia, senility or anything of that nature. Indeed, the person is fully competent but some matter has slipped his mind at that particular time while, perhaps even in just a few moments, the person will be fully aware of the matter that he had temporarily forgotten.[1]

More Details About Mistakes and Forgetfulness

The results of an act done unintentionally or by mistake or an omission of an act due to forgetfulness may differ depending on the nature of the act—although in all cases the person is considered free of sin. Al-Bugha and Mistu divide the cases into the four categories below. Their classification is according to the Shafi'ee application of this hadith.

(1) If a person unintentionally failed to perform an obligatory act, then he is still obliged to perform that obligatory act and he has not been resolved of that responsibility.[2] One example of this nature has been given concerning obligatory prayer. Another example is a person giving his *zakat* to another person thinking that the other person was impoverished. It the receiver at was actually of ample means, the one who gave that money has not fulfilled his obligation of zakat. He must still give his zakat to the right receivers. At the same time, though, he may demand his money back from the wrongful recipient. Another example is where a person, forgetting that he has water, makes *tayammum* instead of ablution. In that case, according to al-Bugha and Mistu, when he remembers he has water, he must perform the proper ablution and repeat any prayers he performed after making *tayammum.*

To the above category, the following example may be added from ibn Rajab: If a person prays while forgetting that he was not in a state of ablution, then he must perform ablution and repeat that prayer when he remembers that fact.[3]

The exception to the above is where the missed deed can no longer be performed. For example, if a person forgot the Friday Prayer, he cannot perform the Friday Prayer on his own (although he does perform the Dhuhr Prayer).[4]

(2) If, due to a mistake or forgetfulness, a person performs a forbidden act that does not involve the destruction of any property or wealth or a

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[1] Another word that is commonly used for forgetfulness is السهو (*al-sahu*). In reality, especially from a fiqh perspective, there is no difference between *al-nisyaan* and *al-sahu*. Cf., ibn Humaid, p. 213.

[2] Al-Zarkashi (*al-Manthoor*, vol. 3, p. 272) wrote, "Forgetfulness is an excuse with respect to the prohibitions but not with respect to the commands." As was pointed out earlier, this can only be considered true if it the principle of *umoom al-muqtadhaa* is rejected with respect to this hadith, "Allah has pardoned..."

[3] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 367.

[4] Cf., ibn Humaid, p. 216.

violation of rights, then there is no punishment or penalty upon him. For example, if a person drinks an alcoholic beverage believing that it was not alcoholic, there is no sin upon him nor is there any punishment for him. Similarly, if a pilgrim wears stitched clothing or cologne out of forgetfulness, there is no penalty or sin.

(3) If, due to a mistake or forgetfulness, a person performs a forbidden act that does involve the destruction of any property or wealth or a violation of rights, then he is responsible for the act he has committed. For example, if a pilgrim hunts and kills an animal, either forgetting that he is in the state of pilgrimage or out of ignorance of the ruling, he must still perform the expiation for the act that he has committed. Commenting on this, Hasan wrote,

> Forgetfulness forms no excuse if the act done results from it and affects private rights. If a man destroys or damages another person's property through forgetfulness, he will be held liable to pay compensation for it. The reason is that a man's rights are inviolable for the general need of the people. Therefore, the culpability of the person violating them will not be considered. The inviolability of a man's rights is not negated by forgetfulness. On the contrary, forgetfulness forms a valid excuse in matters which are purely the right of God. The rights of God are meant for the trial (*ibtila`*) of man so that he may show his obedience to Him. God does not stand in need of man's acts, whether they are words or deeds. God is independent of all creatures. Since the acts of worship require intention (*qasd*) but forgetfulness annihilates intention, hence forgetfulness forms an excuse in respect of rights of God.[1]

Ibn Humaid further points out that if a person were not held responsible for his acts against others done out of forgetfulness or mistake, it would cause a great deal of hardship and destroy the interests of the people. Indeed, it might lead to anarchy. People could destroy others' properties and then claim that it was due to a mistake or some aspect of forgetfulness.[2] Making people responsible for such actions should make them more prudent in their actions.

(4) If a person performs an act unintentionally or out of forgetfulness that would normally require a prescribed punishment, that aspect of non-intention or forgetfulness would be sufficient to remove the punishment from him. However, he may have to fulfill other requirements that are different from the prescribed punishment (as in the case of mistakenly killing another believer, discussed below).[3]

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[1] Hasan, *Principles*, vol. 1, p. 315.

[2] Ibn Humaid, p. 215.

[3] Al-Bugha and Mistu, pp. 333-334. A comparable discussion may be found in ibn Humaid, pp. 215-218.

There are some areas where the ruling for forgetfulness and mistakes differ.

With respect to mistakes, it seems that the previously mentioned Shafi'ee approach needs amendment. In a matter of *ijtihaad* (personal juristic reasoning) if a qualified person exerts himself to the best of his ability to determine some matter and then it turns out that he was mistaken, he is not required to amend for that act. Such is the case, for example, when a person tries his best to determine the direction of the *qibla*. If, afterwards, it is determined that he prayed in the wrong direction, he is not required to repeat his prayer.[1] Similarly, if a person makes a ruling or a judge makes a decision based on all the information available to him and does his best to come to the right conclusion, he is not held responsible if his decision is mistaken.[2]

Two Approaches to Forgetfulness

The above discussion elaborates one widely accepted approach (emphasized by the Shafi'ees) to forgetfulness: if one forgets a deed, he still has to make up that deed; if one out of forgetfulness does something wrong or invalidates a deed, there is no harm and the forgetfulness is considered inconsequential.

Sometimes the surrounding environment may induce one to forget something while at other times the surrounding situation should keep one from forgetting something. For example, being in prayer in congregation has enough of a special feeling that one should not do something like eat out of forgetfulness. However, if one is praying the Noon Prayer and is sitting after the second *rakah*, it would not be shocking for him to forget that he was in the second instead of the fourth *rakah* and then to make the *tasleem* signifying the end of the prayer. Many scholars, in particular the Hanafis, would consider the latter case excusable but not the former case. There are other cases in which there is nothing special to remind the person and keep him from forgetting nor is there anything to lead him to forget. In these cases, it seems that the rule of overlooking the act done through forgetfulness takes precedence.[3]

Notice that this implies two somewhat distinct— although at times overlapping— approaches to forgetfulness. Both of these approaches have some clear evidences in the hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him). For example, one hadith states,

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[1] Al-Hisni (vol. 2, p. 273) states that according to the strongest opinion among the Shafi'ees, the person must repeat his prayer under such a circumstance. This conclusion seems strange to this author given that al-Hisni argued for the implementation of *umoom al-muqtadhaa* with respect to this hadith. It seems that the ruling of the prayer said in the wrong direction based on an incorrect *ijtihaad* should be overlooked. Allah knows best.

[2] Ibn Humaid, p. 223.

[3] Cf., Hasan, *Principles*, p. 316. Also see al-Jaboori, pp. 212-216.

مَنْ نَسِيَ صَلاةً فَلْيُصَلِّ إِذَا ذَكَرَهَا لا كَفَّارَةَ لَهَا إِلاَّ ذَلِكَ

"Whoever forgets a prayer must pray it when he remembers it. And there is no expiation for it except that." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.) This supports the view that if one forgets an obligatory act, one must still perform that act upon recalling it.

Another hadith states,

مَنْ نَسِيَ وَهُوَ صَائِمٌ فَأَكَلَ أَوْ شَرِبَ فَلْيُتِمَّ صَوْمَهُ فَإِنَّمَا أَطْعَمَهُ اللَّهُ وَسَقَاهُ

"Whoever forgets and eats or drinks while he is fasting should complete his fast for it was only Allah who fed him or gave him drink." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.) This hadith is used to support the view that under some circumstances forgetfulness is excused because there were no reinforcing aspects that should keep a person from forgetting.

When is Forgetfulness Not an Excuse?

Al-Bugha and Mistu point out that if a person is himself the cause of his own forgetfulness or of an act that he could have avoided, then he is not excused. In other words, if he could have taken the steps to prevent his forgetfulness or the ensuing act, then he is not excused. One example they give is that of a person who sees something impure on his clothing but he takes his time in removing it, to the point that he forgets it is there. If he later prays with that same impurity on his clothing, he will not be excused, as it was due to his own lack of action. Hence, he will be required to make up those prayers upon realizing what he has done.[1]

Similarly, al-Raazi wrote, "If a person is heedless concerning the study and repetition [of what he has memorized of the Quran] to the point that he forgets [what he had memorized], he will be blameworthy. However, if he continually practiced his recitation but after that he forgot what he had memorized, in that case, he will be excused."[2]

The Hanafi legal theorist, al-Bazdawi also wrote,

> Forgetfulness is an excuse according to the right of the *shareeah* only if it were not due to heedlessness. Otherwise, it is not an excuse, as it was not an excuse in the case of Adam (peace be upon him) or the one who forgets what he had memorized of the Quran while he had the ability to study it over and over. Such things occurred due to his own

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[1] Al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 334.

[2] Al-Raazi, *Tafseer*, vol. 7, p. 144.

> shortcoming and, therefore, they can be acceptable causes for punishment.[1]

"[what is done] under duress"

Hasan has given the following definitions for *ikraah* (duress, coercion):

> Coercion or duress (*ikraah*) means to urge another person to perform that to which he does not consent, and that which he would not choose to perform personally in a direct manner if he were left alone...
> Coercion or duress (*ikraah*) means to urge a man by another man to perform an act which he dislikes, and which he would not intend to perform personally in a direct manner if he were not urged on it by threat.[2]

Coercion, therefore, involves both a dislike for the act by the one being coerced as well as being forced to perform that act. Hence, it is a case where the person, if left to his own volition, would not perform a specific act. However, due to coercion from others, he performs the act "against his will". His intention is not actually to perform the act itself but to avert the threatened punishment; if not for the coercion, the act would not have been carried out.[3]

For there to be a true case of coercion, four components must be present:

(1) The one who doing the coercing (*al-mukrih*)
(2) The coerced (*al-mukrah*)
(3) The threat of the one doing the coercion (*al-mukrah bih*)
(4) The act that one is being coerced to perform (*al-mukrah alaih*)

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[1] Abdul Azeez al-Bukhaari, *Kashf al-Asraar an Usool Fakhr al-Islam al-Bazdawi* (Beirut: Daar al-Kitaab al-Arabi, 1994), vol. 4, p. 457.

[2] Hasan, *Principles*, vol. 1, p. 365. There is clearly a relationship between the case of coercion and the case of necessity. In both cases, the person is put into a situation where he does something he would not normally do. In both cases, the *shareeah* has provided special exemptions and permission to allow the person to meet his needs under those special circumstances. In one sense, coercion can be considered a subset of necessity since when one is threatened with death, one has truly entered a state of necessity. However, in other cases, the type of threat (such as the threat of imprisonment) is not sufficient to consider the case a case of necessity. Cf., Isa Shaqra, *Al-Ikraah wa Atharuhu fi al-Tasarufaat* (Beirut: Muassasah al-Risaalah, 1987), pp. 34-36.

[3] Shaqra points out the tremendous importance of the fiqh regulations concerning coercion. In almost every era, one will find oppressors and oppressed. The oppressors want the populace to do things they are not wanting to do. The oppressors usually then resort to pressure and force on the populace. Hence, it is important for the Muslims to know the fiqh of the question of compulsion and coercion before they act under such circumstances (see Shaqra, p. 11). Indeed, one of the most common forms of coercion today is the threatening of the family of a person who refuses to submit to the demands of the oppressor. In modern times, Muslims have commonly been forced to commit crimes against other Muslims. There is no question that this is a very important topic and perhaps it should be discussed on a wider scale than it has been discussed.

For example, Mr. X says to Mr. Y, "Divorce your wife or I will kill you." In this case, the one doing the coercing is Mr. X. Mr. Y is the coerced. The threat is the threat of death. The act being coerced is the divorce of Mr. Y's wife.

Each of these four components has some important aspects to them. Therefore, they shall each be discussed separately in brief.[1]

The One Doing the Coercing (*al-mukrih*)

The most important condition concerning the one doing the coercing is that he have the ability to carry out what he is threatening. Actually, it is sufficient for the coerced to believe (with reason) that the one doing the coercing has such an ability. If the coercing person actually has no ability (or cannot reasonably be believed to be able) to carry out his threat, then it cannot be considered coercion.

It seems that it was Abu Hanifah's opinion, as well as Ahmad's according to one narration, that the only one who is in a position to coerce anybody else is the ruler. This is because he is the only one considered to have the ability to implement the threat he has made. However, the majority of scholars, including Abu Hanifah's leading students, are of the opinion that anyone who has the ability to carry out a threat qualifies.

The difference of opinion on this question has been explained by the fact that during the time of Abu Hanifah it was, in reality, only the ruler who could make a dangerous threat and then carry it out. No one else could do such a thing because the control of the Islamic government was quite strong and the government would punish or deter anyone else from doing such a thing. In later times, when things changed, others were able to make such threats without much fear of being punished by the government. Hence, later Hanafi scholars changed the school's view on this issue and said that the malicious threat of anyone, the ruler or otherwise, who has the ability to carry out the threat qualifies as coercion or duress.[2]

The Coerced (*al-mukrah*)

There are certain conditions that the coerced person must meet. First, he must not be pleased with or willing to do the act that he is being urged to do. In fact, if he shows any sign of pleasure or willingness to perform the act, he will not be considered coerced.[3] Second, he must have reason to believe that the one doing the coercing has the ability to carry out his threat. Third, he must not have the ability to defend himself from the one coercing him or his threat. If he does have the ability to ward off the threat or he can possibly flee from the situation or get help from others, he is not considered coerced.

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[1] For more details, the interested reader may consult Shaqra, pp. 43-59.

[2] Cf., Shaqra, pp. 44-45.

[3] The Hanafis distinguish between being pleased with an act and choosing to do it. Choosing to do an act is more general than being pleased with an act. One may choose to do an act that he is not completely pleased with because it is the lesser of two evils. In this case, his choice or intention is defective. The majority of scholars do not make such a distinction between choosing to do an act and being pleased with the act as such has no ramifications in their fiqh conclusions.

The Threat Involved

There is a difference of opinion among the scholars as to whether a threat in and of itself is sufficient to put the threatened into a state of coercion. If a threat is made in conjunction with an immediate punishment, such as being beaten, imprisoned, and so forth, it is considered a true threat and the person involved is being coerced. According to the Hanafis, Malikis, Shafi'ees and one narration from Ahmad, a threat in itself is sufficient for coercion. Another narration from Ahmad states that the threat must be combined with some type of initial punishment. It seems that the strongest opinion is that of the majority, that a plausible threat in itself is sufficient for a case of coercion.[1]

There is also a difference of opinion concerning exactly what determines a threat and what are the different types of threats. Each school of fiqh shall be dealt with separately.

The Hanafi Approach: The Hanafis divide coercion into three types:[2]

(1) A complete, constraining coercion: Under this type of coercion, the coerced person loses all ability to consent or choose. This would be, for example, the threat of being killed, being thrown from the top of a building and other extreme punishments of that nature. In cases like these, it is not unusual for a person to do most anything to avert punishment.

(2) A deficient, non-constraining coercion: This is a threat that is less severe than a threat to one's life or limb. This type would include the threat of being imprisoned for a lengthy period of time, being mildly beaten and so forth. According to the Hanafis, in this case, the person's element of consent has been lost but he still has some freedom of choice. In these cases, it would not be unusual for a person to consider which to accept: either the threatened punishment or the coerced act.

See Masood al-Taftazaani, *Sharh al-Talweeh ala al-Taudheeh li-Matn al-Tanqeeh fi Usool al-Fiqh* (Beirut: Daar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1996), vol. 2, p. 414.

[1] The evidence for and details of these positions may be found in Shaqra, pp. 48-50.

[2] The other schools divide coercion into two types: First is a complete, constraining coercion wherein the person has lost all element of choice. Examples would be a person's forcing another person's hand to sign a contract or a person being carried into a building which he had sworn he would never enter. Under this type of coercion, the coerced person is considered completely free of any responsibility for the act because in such a case he truly had no intention or choice in performing it. The second type of coercion is a deficient non-constraining coercion, which is comparable to the different types of coercion described above by the Hanafis. Cf., ibn Humaid, pp.243-245.

(3) An indirect coercion: In this case, a person is coerced by a threat to others, such as his parents, children, other relatives and so forth. He is told, for example, "If you do not comply, we will punish your parents by imprisoning or beating them." The Hanafis argue that strictly by analogy, this form of coercion does not actually constitute coercion. However, on the principle of *istihsaan*[1], they say that the person is greatly harmed by such a possible threat and, therefore, it functions the same as other coercive threats.

The Shafi'ee Approach: The Shafi'ee approach to this question is not a united approach like that found among most Hanafis. Indeed, al-Nawawi records seven different opinions as to what constitutes a valid threat for coercion among the Shafi'ees.[2] Al-Nawawi himself concludes that coercion is not simply a case where the person completely looses any aspect of choice. Instead, it is a case in which a sane, competent person would choose to do an act that he is compelled to do rather than face its threatened consequences.

From this perspective, what constitutes coercion is different from threat to threat and person to person. For example, one may be coerced to pronounce a divorce of his wife with the threat of imprisonment while that same threat would not be coercion for a greater act. Furthermore, two people may consider the same threat very differently. For example, the people of status and dignity would be very alarmed if they were threatened with having their faces painted black and being put on the back of a donkey and paraded in front of the people in a public square. However, people of a lower status or criminals may not be affected by such a threat.[3]

According to this view, one being coerced to commit murder upon threat of imprisonment, the killing of a relative or the destruction of property would not be excused for committing the murder, since the gravity of the coerced act outweighs the threatened punishment. However, coercing someone to destroy or hand over his wealth by the threat of imprisonment or the killing of his son is considered a case of coercion, because the threatened act is more grievous than the coerced act.

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[1] Kamali has provided an excellent definition of *istihsaan*: "*Istihsaan* literally means 'to approve, or to deem something preferable'... In a juristic sense, *istihsaan* is a method of exercising personal opinion in order to avoid any rigidity and unfairness that might result from the literal enforcement of the law. 'Juristic preference' is a fitting description of *istihsaan*, as it involves setting aside an established analogy in favour of an alternative ruling which serves the ideals of justice and public interest in a better way. Enforcing the existing law may prove to be detrimental in certain situations, and a departure from it may be the only way of attaining a fair solution to a particular problem. The jurist who resorts to *istihsaan* may find the law to be either too general, or too specific and inflexible. In both cases, *istihsaan* may offer a means of avoiding hardship and generating a solution which is harmonious with the higher objectives of the *shareeah*." Kamali, pp. 246-7. As one may conclude from the definition itself, it is a somewhat controversial concept among the different schools of fiqh with some schools giving it much more emphasis than others.

[2] See Yahya al-Nawawi, *Raudhat al-Taalibeen wa Umdah al-Mufteen* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islaami, 1991), vol. 8, pp. 58-61. Some of the other views among the Shafi'ees not discussed above but mentioned by al-Nawawi include the following: (1) Only the threat of death constitutes coercion; (2) Only the threat of death or great physical harm constitutes coercion; (3) Coercion is only where the person has lost all sense of volition, where he is like a man fleeing from a lion.

[3] This type of act was done to humiliate people who committed certain crimes.

The Maliki Approach: For the Malikis, a fear of a painful experience is sufficient to constitute coercion. This would include a threat of being killed, beaten, imprisoned and so forth. They also stress that the same threat may be considered coercion under certain circumstances and not under others. For example, the threat of being severely beaten would constitute coercion for all. However, the threat of being lightly beaten in public would be coercion for the people of rank and dignity but not necessarily for others. Similarly, painting the face of a person of dignity black in a private setting would not be a coercive threat, while doing so publicly would be. As for threatening to destroy someone's wealth, some Malikis do not consider it coercive while others do. A third opinion among them is that if the amount of wealth is large, then it is coercion; and, if the amount of wealth is small, it is not.[1]

The Hanbali Approach: For the Hanbalis, coercion occurs when the threatened action is too great and harmful for the person to bear, such as being threatened with death, beating, long imprisonment, the taking of one's wealth or house, and so forth.

Some of the Hanbalis, though, state that being beat or imprisoned is not valid for coercion among those people who can withstand such a punishment. They also distinguish between those who can withstand certain threats and those who cannot withstand those threats, such as the people of rank and dignity. Ibn Qudaamah even mentions that some Hanbalis consider verbal disgracing and abuse to be sufficient for coercion among certain elements of society.

Some Hanbalis do not consider a threat to one's son, wife or father as a valid threat for coercion because it is actually a threat of harm to someone else. However, it seems that the strongest opinion among the Hanbalis is that such should be considered a threat involving coercion as it brings about such pain to the person as he cannot withstand.[2]

Shaqra's Conclusions: After reviewing the above views concerning the threat that coerces a person into performing an act, Shaqra has made the following conclusions:

(1) Although the schools describe the threat in various ways, their opinions concerning what constitutes a threat that leads to coercion are very

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[1] Cf., Shaqra, pp. 53-54.

[2] Cf., Shaqra, pp. 54-55; Ali al-Mardaawi, *al-Insaaf fi Marifat al-Raajih min al-Khilaaf ala Madhhab al-Imaam al-Mubajjal Ahmad ibn Hanbal* (Beirut: Daar Ihyaa al-Turaath al-Arabi, 1957),vol. 8, pp. 440-2.

similar and compatible. In general, the threat must be of such a great harm that it makes the coerced person afraid enough to perform the coerced act in order to rescue himself from the situation he is facing.

(2) There is no clear text of the Quran or sunnah that defines or gives the parameters of the kind of threat that counts as coercion in the *shareeah*. However, examples from the Prophet's lifetime, such as the suffering that took place in Makkah, and some of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) statements, one can approximately derive the nature of threat. For example, the Arabic words used in the present hadith translated as, "under duress," imply a situation in which a person is doing something that he dislikes while being forced or pressured into doing it.

The following has also been narrated from some of the Companions:

Umar ibn al-Khattaab said, "A man cannot control himself if I starve him, tie him up or beat him." Abdullah ibn Masood said, "If a person in power wants to force me to say something and he beats me once or twice, I will say what he has asked."

(3) The case of coercion differs depending on the person being coerced, the nature of the threat, and the weight of the threat as compared to that of the thing being demanded. Some people are able to withstand much more than others, so that one person would be considered coerced in some cases whereas someone else in a similar situation would not. Similarly, what his being threatened must be greater in harm than the act requested. If such is not the case, it cannot be considered a case of coercion.[1]

The Act One is Being Coerced to Perform

The scholars argue that coercion does not destroy legal capacity and responsibility. This means that even in cases of coercion, there are certain rulings by which the person must abide. If he does not do so, he would be considered a sinner. For example, if a person is threatened with death if he does not drink wine, it becomes obligatory upon him to drink that wine. If he does not do so and allows himself to be killed simply to avoid drinking wine, he would be considered a sinner as his *shareeah* obligation at that time was to drink the wine. This is because the obligation to preserve one's life outweighs the sin of drinking alcohol.

For there to be a true case of coercion, either the act the person is being forced to perform must be something forbidden or he must be threatened with something forbidden.[2] For example, if the heirs of a person who was killed say to the killer, "We will not invoke the law of retaliation against you if you divorce your wife," that would not be a case of coercion. This is because he is free to divorce his wife if he wants to. In that case, he is simply making a choice to do a permissible act in order to avoid another permissible choice that he wishes to avoid. The rules and principles of coercion would not apply in such a case.

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[1] Cf., Shaqra, pp. 55-57.

[2] Many books simply state that to qualify as coercion, the forced act need be forbidden, However, that is not true. Someone could be coerced to divorce his wife, sell an item and so forth. All of these acts are permissible, yet would still be considered coercion. Hence, such statements by scholars have been modified in the above text.

Furthermore, the scholars distinguish between cases in which one is compelled to do something that is right and correct and cases in which one is compelled to do something forbidden.[1] For example, if a judge compels someone to sell off part of his property in order to pay off his debts, such is not considered a case of coercion and the principles discussed herein do not apply to such a case, since the payment of the debt is a righteous act.[2]

Given the above points, the acts that one may be coerced into performing are divided into three categories:

(1) Those acts that one is forbidden to perform even while under coercion.

(2) Those acts that one is required to perform while under coercion.

(3) Those acts that one is allowed to perform under coercion, though it is considered better and more virtuous for the person to abstain from them. In such cases, the permissibility of a normally forbidden act is known as *rukhsah* or concession due to special circumstances.

Examples from each of these categories will be given in the "Related Fiqh Issues" section.

Accountability for the Coerced Act

The Hanafi and majority approach also differ with respect to accountability of the coerced act. This is an important question as it is the responsible person who is going to have to face the worldly consequences of the coerced forbidden act.[3]

To understand the majority view on this point, one has to keep in mind the above distinction between acts that are permissible, forbidden or a concession under cases of coercion. An act which remains forbidden in a case of coercion will be attributed to both the person who actually performed the act and the one doing the coercing. The coerced, from a legal point of view, had no right to perform the act. The one doing the coercing is also to blame for his coercion led to the act in the first place. Hence, they share in the responsibility of the act, though the punishment for each may differ given that one was the actual cause and the other was being coerced.

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[1] In general, the word الإكراه (*al-ikraah*) is used when being coerced to doing something forbidden. The word الإجبار (*al-ijbaar*) is usually used when being coerced to do something that is right and correct.

[2] See Shaqra, p. 59.

[3] For more on this topic discussed in this section, see Hasan, *Principles*, vol. 1, pp. 371-379; al-Jaboori, pp. 481-487.

If the coerced act falls under the category of what is generally legal for the coerced to perform and is the nature of a transaction or contract, the coercion will render the transaction legally void; in other words, it will not be ascribed to the doer at all. For example, if a person is coerced to divorce his wife, marry a woman or sell a specific item, that divorce, marriage or sale would not be legally binding, since the person had no real intention to make that transaction; so the law would consider it as if the act never took place.

If the coerced act falls under the category of concession for the coerced, then the act will be attributed to the one doing the coercing. For example, if a person's life is threatened unless he destroys someone else's property, he is allowed to destroy the other person's property, and the one responsible for the act will be the one doing the coercing. Hence, he is the one who will have to pay the damages for the person whose property was damaged.

The Hanafi perspective differs greatly from the above majority perspective. To understand their view, one must first divide the topic of coerced acts into: dispositions (*tasarrufaat*), admissions (*iqraaraat*) and acts.

With respect to dispositions, they must also be divided into two categories: those dispositions that may be revoked or annulled and those which may not be revoked or annulled. In general, sales, leasing and other similar types of business transactions may be annulled. Marriage, divorce, freeing of slaves and other dispositions are irrevocable.

According to the Hanafi perspective, revocable dispositions done under coercion are considered "defective" (*faasid*). In other words, they are not completely valid because they are lacking the complete consent of the one who was coerced. If he later, after the period of coercion, approves of the disposition, the disposition will be considered sound and binding.

Those acts which are irrevocable are completely binding and sound even if done under duress according to the Hanafis. In this case, these acts are completely dependent upon the will of the person and not on his consent. He willed to make the statement of that disposition— even though he willed it simply to avoid the threatened punishment— and, therefore, it is legally effective. Hanafi scholars make an analogy between the one who says something in jest and the one who is coerced. In the case of the one who says something in jest, he did not desire the resultant legal effect but he did will the statement or disposition. If such a disposition is binding on the one who says something in jest, the Hanafis argue, it must also be binding on the one who is coerced to do such an act.[1]

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[1] Ibn Humaid wrote (p. 249), "The strongest opinion in the view of this researcher, and Allah knows best, is the opinion that the statements of one under coercion are not sound in any case, whether admissions or dispositions or for both what may be annulled and what may not be. This is much more in accord with the spirit of the Islamic *shareeah* concerning facility and removal of hardship. If the *shareeah* allows the person under coercion to make statements of unbelief [without any worldly, legal ramification] as long as his heart is content with faith, then it must allow statements that are even less than that. The Hanafis accept the fact that the admission of

For the Hanafis, admissions are not acceptable if they are the result of coercion. This is because the goal of admissions is the ascertain of what is true while such is negated in the case of admitting to something solely to avoid a threat.

With respect to acts done by the coerced, the Hanafis divide such acts into two categories: (1) acts in which the coerced person can truly be considered simply the instrument or tool of the one doing the coercing and (2) acts in which the coerced cannot be considered simply the instrument of the one doing the coercing.

The first type is also subdivided into two categories. The Hanafis distinguish between cases where attributing the act to the one who is doing the coercing (and considering the coerced simply his instrument) will change the subject matter of the offense (*mahall al-jinaahyah*) and where it will not. If the subject matter of the offense will be changed by attributing the act to the one doing the coercing, that would, in essence, bring an end to any form of coercion for coercion is an attempt to harm another person by making him do something that he does not will to do. Hasan has given the following example to illustrate this point,

> For instance, if a person in the state of *ihraam* (pilgrim sanctity) compells [*sic*] another person in a state of *ihraam* (pilgrim sanctity) to kill a game and he kills it, the legal effect of this offence will be confined to the coerced or doer. He will be liable for violating the sacred state. The reason is that the coercer [*sic*] intended to harm him by compelling him to violate his own sacred state. If the act of the coerced is imputed to the coercer and he (the doer) is treated as the instrument of the coercer, he (i.e., the coercer) will be responsible for violation of the sacred state- a change in the character of the subject matter. In other words, the coercer wanted to harm the coerced by compelling him to violate his own sacred state and then bear the legal consequences. But by imputing the act to the coercer, he (the coercer) himself will have to bear the legal consequences. In this manner, the coercion itself will be annulled.[1]

If such change in the subject matter of the offence does not occur when the coerced person is simply considered an instrument of coercion and the coercion is constraining, the act will be attributed to the one doing the coercing

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one under coercion is void. Their distinguishing between what may be annulled and what may not be annulled is not [logically] clear [that is, an obviously acceptable conclusion]. In fact, the issue of marriage and sexual intercourse is more important than issues of wealth. It is for that reason that a woman's permission and consent is sought in matters of marriage in a more emphasized manner than in matters of trade. Also the analogy between the coerced and the joking person concerning divorce is not clear. The joking person chose to say those words he said; however, the coerced person did not have any real choice in saying those words."

[1] Hasan, *Principles*, vol. 1, p. 377.

and not to the coerced. So, if under coercion, one man destroys another man's property, the act will be attributed to the one doing the coercing and he will be responsible for the damage.

If the coercion was not constraining, the coerced person will be considered responsible for the act and not the one doing the coercing. This is because he has, in essence, made the free choice to perform that act.

According to the Hanafis, also, there are some coerced acts in which the coerced person could never be considered simply the instrument of the one doing the coercing. This category includes the acts of eating, drinking and sexual intercourse. Their argument is that it is inconceivable to imagine one person forcing another person to do those acts; for example, a man cannot eat with somebody else's mouth. In those cases, the act will be attributed to the coerced person and the aspect of coercion will have no legal affect whatsoever. Therefore, if a fasting person is coerced to eat, it will be concluded that he himself broke his fast and not the person who coerced him to do so.

The Hanafi approach to the question of to whom the coerced act is to be ascribed is shown in Figure 39.6.

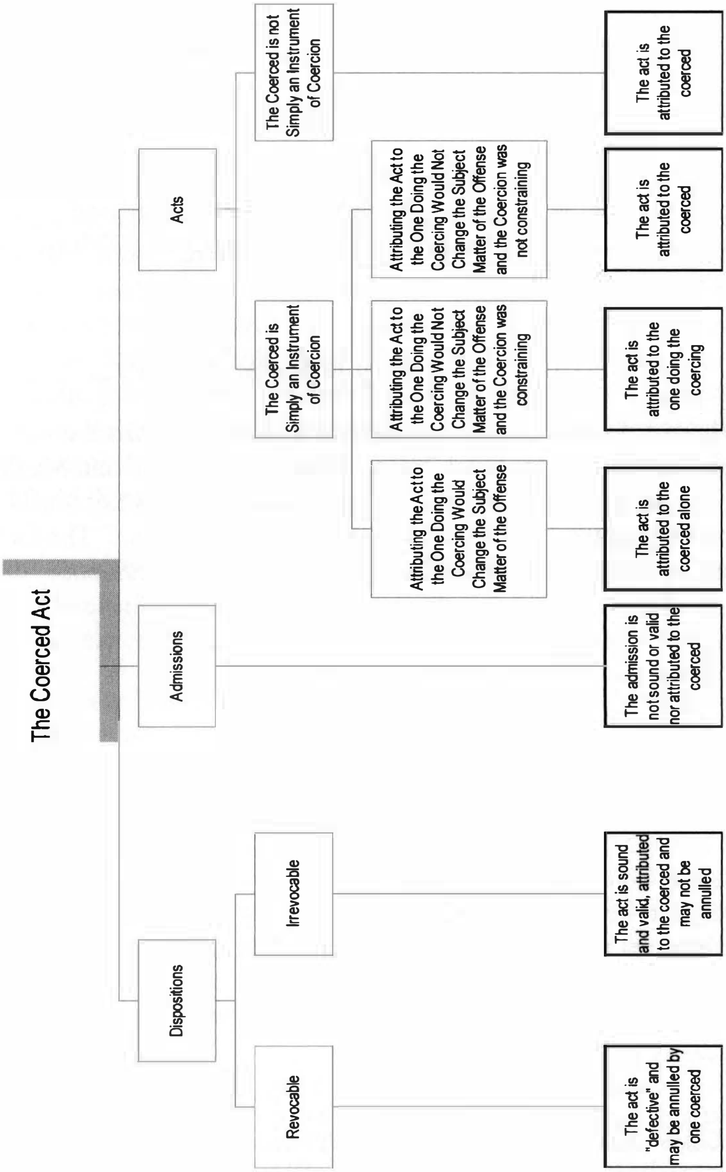
The Coerced Act
Acts
Admissions
Dispositions
The Coerced is not Simply an Instrument of Coercion
The Coerced is Simply an Instrument of Coercion
Attributing the Act to the One Doing the Coercing Would Change the Subject Matter of the Offense
Attributing the Act to the One Doing the Coercing Would Not Change the Subject Matter of the Offense and the Coercion was constraining
Attributing the Act to the One Doing the Coercing Would Not Change the Subject Matter of the Offense and the Coercion was not constraining
Irrevocable
Revocable
The act is attributed to the coerced
The act is attributed to the coerced
The act is attributed to the one doing the coercing
The act is attributed to the coerced alone
The admission is not sound or valid nor attributed to the coerced
The act is sound and valid, attributed to the coerced and may not be annulled
The act is "defective" and may be annulled by one coerced

Figure 39.6 The Hanafi Approach Concerning Attribution of the Coerced Act

Related Fiqh Issues

Missing a Prayer Due to Forgetfulness or Mistake

If a person forgets one of the five daily prayers, then he is not considered sinful. However, he must perform that missed prayer as soon as he has realized what has happened. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) stated,

مَنْ نَسِيَ صَلاَةً فَلْيُصَلِّ إِذَا ذَكَرَهَا لاَ كَفَّارَةَ لَهَا إِلاَّ ذَلِكَ

"Whoever forgets a prayer must pray it when he remembers it. And there is no expiation for it except that." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

In this example, the fact that the person is not sinful can be derived from this hadith, "Allah has pardoned for my Nation..." The fact that the prayer must be made up is based on a separate piece of evidence, the hadith quoted above. Hence, this example sheds no light on the difficult question discussed earlier: Does this hadith, "Allah has pardoned for my Nation..." imply only the sin or the sin and the worldly ruling?

Mistakenly Killing Another Muslim

If a Muslim kills another Muslim by mistake, such as in an attempt to kill a non-Muslim during battle, there is no sin upon him. In other words, Allah will not hold him to account for it in the Hereafter. However, that does not mean that he is not required to do anything due to that grave act. He still must perform an act of expiation for that mistake. This is due— and Allah knows best— to the great sanctity of human life. It may also serve as a protection against reckless killings in which the killer denies any responsibility toward the deceased and his family.

Concerning this matter, Allah says in the Quran,

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ أَن يَقْتُلَ مُؤْمِنًا إِلَّا خَطَـًٔا ۚ وَمَن قَتَلَ مُؤْمِنًا خَطَـًٔا
فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُّؤْمِنَةٍ وَدِيَةٌ مُّسَلَّمَةٌ إِلَىٰٓ أَهْلِهِۦٓ إِلَّآ أَن يَصَّدَّقُوا۟ ۚ فَإِن كَانَ
مِن قَوْمٍ عَدُوٍّ لَّكُمْ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُّؤْمِنَةٍ ۖ وَإِن كَانَ مِن قَوْمٍۭ
بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُم مِّيثَـٰقٌ فَدِيَةٌ مُّسَلَّمَةٌ إِلَىٰٓ أَهْلِهِۦ وَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُّؤْمِنَةٍ ۖ فَمَن

لَّمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ شَهْرَيْنِ مُتَتَابِعَيْنِ تَوْبَةً مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ وَكَانَ ٱللَّهُ عَلِيمًا
حَكِيمًا

“It is not for a believer to kill a believer except by mistake. And whoever kills a believer by mistake, then the freeing of a believing slave and a compensation blood-money payment presented to his family [is required], unless they give it up as charity [on their part]. But if he [the killed] were from a people at war with you and he was a believer, then [there is only] the freeing of a believing slave. And if he were from a people with whom you have a treaty, then a compensation payment presented to his family and the freeing of a believing slave. And whoever does not find one, then [instead] a fast of two consecutive months, [seeking] acceptance of repentance from Allah. And Allah is ever knowing and wise” (*al-Nisaa* 92).

Forgetting to Mention Allah’s Name Upon Slaughtering an Animal

According to al-Shafi’ee, some Malikis and a narration from Ahmad, to mention the name of Allah upon slaughtering an animal is simply a recommended act.[1] Therefore, according to this view, if a person does not mention Allah’s name either intentionally or out of forgetfulness, there is no problem and the meat is still considered permissible to eat.

According to Abu Hanifah, Malik and a better known narration from Ahmad, the mentioning of Allah’s name is a condition or an obligation for the permissibility of the meat. Their argument rests mostly on the understanding of verse 121 of *Surah al-Anaam*, quoted below. However, these scholars agree that if a person slaughters an animal with the intention of slaughtering it properly but forgets to mention the name of Allah upon slaughtering, the meat is still considered permissible to eat.[2]

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[1] Cf., al-Tiraiqi, *Ahkaam al-Dhabaaih*, p. 222.

[2] Cf., Muhammad ibn Rooshd, *Bidaayat al-Mujtahid wa Nihaayat al-Muqtasid* (Cairo: Maktabah ibn Taimiya, 1415 A.H.), vol. 2, p. 474. It should be noted, though, that ibn Rushd states that these scholars overlook the case of one who has forgotten to mention the name of Allah based on the hadith under discussion here, “Allah has pardoned for my Nation [what is done] by mistake, out of forgetfulness or under duress.” Al-Tiraiqi (*Ahkaam*, p. 232) says the same of the Hanafis, and refers to *Takmilah Sharh Fath al-Qadeer*. If what they said were true, it would imply a complete reversal and inconsistency on the part of the Hanafis in their understanding of this hadith. However, when one goes to the *Takmilah Fath al-Qadeer* and the other commentaries printed with it, one finds that not one of those Hanafi scholars quoted the hadith, "Allah has pardoned..." in their arguing that when a person forgets to mention the name of Allah upon slaughtering an animal, it is still permissible to eat that meat. Instead, they refer to the concepts of hardship and the fact that while slaughtering, one is in an environment that may contribute to forgetfulness. See the four works printed together Ali al-Margheenani, *al-Hidaayah Sharh Bidaayah al-Mubtadi*, Qaadhi Zaada *Nataaij al-Afkaan fi Kashf al-Rumooz al-Asraar*, Muhammad al-Baabarti, *Sharh al-Anaayah ala al-Hidaayah*, Saad Saadi Afandi, *Haashiyah* (Beirut: Daar al-Fikr, n.d.), vol. 9, pp. 490-492.

There were some scholars who were of the opinion that if a person does not mention Allah's name, either intentionally or out of forgetfulness, the animal is not permissible to be eaten. These scholars included Muhammad ibn Seereen, Abdullah ibn Umar, al-Shabi, Abu Thaur and Dawood ibn Ali. They base their opinion on the express meaning of the verse,

وَلَا تَأۡكُلُواْ مِمَّا لَمۡ يُذۡكَرِ ٱسۡمُ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيۡهِ وَإِنَّهُۥ لَفِسۡقٞۗ

"And do not eat of that over which the name of Allah has not been mentioned, for it is indeed grave disobedience" (*al-Anaam* 121).

They also support their opinion by stating that under such circumstances, there is no call for a person to forget to mention the name of Allah. However, this argument can be answered that if the person is not an experienced butcher, the nervousness and excitement of the situation may cause him to forget to mention the name of Allah.

After discussing five different opinions on this question (the above three as well as two other minor opinions), al-Jaboori concludes that if an inexperienced person slaughters an animal and forgets to mention the name of Allah, it is permissible to eat that meat. However, if an experienced butcher forgets to mention the name of Allah, it is not allowed to eat such an animal.[1]

It could also be argued that a butcher slaughters a large number of animals on a regular basis. Therefore, it should not be surprising if he occasionally forgets to mention Allah's name. Hence, one could argue, his forgetting to mention Allah's name should be excused.

However, it seems that the strongest view would be that, if the mentioning of Allah's name is a condition for the permissibility of the meat slaughtered, the slaughtered animal is permissible to be eaten if the person, an experienced butcher or otherwise, simply forgot to mention Allah's name upon slaughtering the animal. This conclusion is not based on this hadith, "Allah has pardoned for my Nation...," since that hadith is only in relation to any sin in the Hereafter. Instead, it is based on the Quranic verse above,

وَلَا تَأۡكُلُواْ مِمَّا لَمۡ يُذۡكَرِ ٱسۡمُ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيۡهِ وَإِنَّهُۥ لَفِسۡقٞۗ

"And do not eat of that which the name of Allah has not been mentioned, for indeed, it is grave disobedience" (*al-Anaam* 121), as an act done out of forgetfulness is never termed "grave disobedience". Hence, the verse is not referring to such a case.[2]

Allah knows best.

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[1] See al-Jaboori, pp. 214-216.

[2] Cf., al-Tiraiqi, *Ahkaam*, p. 227.

Speaking During the Prayer Out of Forgetfulness

The scholars are agreed that it is not allowed to speak during the prayer except for the words of the prayer or to correct the Imam when he makes a mistake. However, the scholars differ concerning one who speaks out of forgetfulness or due to ignorance of its prohibition.

According to the Hanafis, speech is forbidden during the prayer in all of its forms, intentional or unintentional. Their view is based on the clear hadith recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim stating that the Companions used to speak during the prayer until verse 238 of *surah al-Baqara*[1] was revealed. After that time, no form of non-prayer speaking was allowed. As for this hadith, "Allah has pardoned for my Nation [what is done] by mistake, out of forgetfulness or under duress," they argue that it only removes the sin of the act and not the ruling of it invalidating the prayer.[2]

According to the Shafi'ees[3] and Malikis, talking during the prayer out of forgetfulness does not invalidate the prayer. Inadvertent or unintentional speech is not what is forbidden by the above mentioned verse. (It should be noted that they do distinguish between a lot of speech and a little bit of speech.)

Both of the above views have been narrated from Ahmad.

According to ali-Bisaam, the evidence for the opinion that speech does not invalidate the prayer is strong. Muslim records a hadith in which one of the Companions said, "May Allah have mercy on you" to another person who sneezed during the prayer. After the prayer, the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated that it is not proper to have any worldly or mundane speech in the prayer. However, he did not order him to repeat the prayer.[4]

Another proof for this view is the "hadith of Dhu-l-Yadain," recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim, in which the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) performed only two *rakat*s of a four *rakat* prayer. Dhu-l-Yadain informed the Prophet (peace be upon him) of that happening. The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked the people whether or not Dhu-l-Yadain was correct. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) was told that he had only prayed two *rakat*s, he simply performed two more *rakat*s to make a total of four. Hence, he did not consider his prayer invalidated due to his speaking, as otherwise he would have performed the entire four *rakat*s over again.[5] This hadith is clear evidence that one who speaks out of forgetfulness or ignorance does not invalidate his prayer.[1]

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[1] The relevant portion of the verse reads, "And stand before Allah, devoutly obedient."

[2] Cf., Muhammad ibn Ali al-Shaukaani, *Nail al-Autaar* (Beirut: Daar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1995), vol. 2, p. 332.

[3] Al-Khinn points out that in his entire discussion of this issue, not once does al-Shafi'ee refer to the concept of *umoom al-muqtadhaa* or anything of that nature. See al-Khinn, pp. 159-160.

[4] The Hanafi response to this argument is that it is not narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered him to repeat the prayer. However, that does not necessarily mean that he did not order him to repeat the prayer.

[5] The Hanafi response to this argument is that the ruling derived from the hadith of Dhul-Yadain has been abrogated by the other hadith demonstrating that one should not speak in the prayer.

It should be noted that the first hadith ali-Bisaam referred to is irrelevant as it was obviously a case of ignorance and not a case of forgetfulness; the rulings for ignorance are not exactly the same as those for forgetfulness. The hadith of Dhu-l-Yadain is a much stronger proof. It is an argument *a fortiori*[2]; in other words, if all of that speech of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and Dhu-l-Yadain did not invalidate his prayer, then, obviously, speaking a few words or such out of forgetfulness should not invalidate a person's prayer.

Eating, Drinking or Sexual Intercourse Out of Forgetfulness While Fasting Ramadhaan

The majority of the scholars are of the opinion that if a person forgets that he is fasting and eats something, then, as soon as he remembers that he was fasting, he must stop eating and fast the rest of the day.[3] His eating by mistake did not invalidate his fast nor does he have to make that day of fasting up at a later date. This opinion is based on the following hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him):

مَنْ نَسِيَ وَهُوَ صَائِمٌ فَأَكَلَ أَوْ شَرِبَ فَلْيُتِمَّ صَوْمَهُ فَإِنَّمَا أَطْعَمَهُ اللَّهُ وَسَقَاهُ

Cf., Muhammad Ameen ibn Abideen, *Radd al-Mukhtaar ala al-Durr al-Mukhtaar Sharh Tanweer al-Absaar* (Beirut: Daar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1994), vol. 2, pp. 371-372. Abrogation is much more difficult to prove and, therefore, to accept than the claim of particularization.

[1] Cf., Abdullah ali-Bisaam, *Taiseer al-Alaam Sharh Umdat al-Ahkaam* (Damascus: Daar al-Faihaa, 1996), vol. 1, pp. 245-246.

[2] An *a fortiori* argument is defined as, "arguing from an accepted conclusion to an even more evident one". [See *The New Encyclopedia Brittanica* (Chicago: Encyclopedia Brittanica, Inc., 1989), vol. 26, p. 809.] This is exactly the same concept as what the Hanafis call *dalaalah al-nass* and what the *mutakallimoon* call *mafhoom al-muwaafiqah.*

[3] On this point, the Hanafis are in agreement with the Shafi'ees. The Hanafis are not being inconsistent in this case. They follow this opinion only because there is an explicit proof for this case, as opposed to in the previous case. Had the evidence for this position been only the hadith, "Allah has pardoned for my Nation [what is done] by mistake, out of forgetfulness or under duress," it would not have been considered a sufficient argument for the Hanafis. Furthermore, some argue that there is a great difference between the fast and the prayer. A person is naturally inclined to eat and drink during the daytime whenever he is hungry or thirsty. While fasting, there is no strong, present reminder that he is fasting and not allowed to satisfy that need. Hence, it is very possible for a person to forget and eat or drink while fasting. In prayer, on the other hand, the environment itself (the way that one is standing, what he is reciting, the congregation and so forth) remind the person that he is in prayer and there is no strong drive for him to speak. So for him to forget that he is in prayer and speak inappropriately is not to be excused. He invalidates his prayer by speaking out of forgetfulness, whereas the one who breaks his fast out of forgetfulness does not invalidate the fast.

"Whoever forgets and eats or drinks while he is fasting should complete his fast for it was only Allah who fed him or gave him to drink." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.[1])

According to Malik, the person who eats out of forgetfulness must make that day up at a later date although there is no other form of expiation he must make. He is like one who has forgotten a prayer.[2]

In this case, though, it seems that the view of the majority is the correct opinion. This is because there is another hadith that states,

مَنْ أَفْطَرَ فِيْ رَمَضَانَ نَاسِياً فَلاَ قَضَاءَ وَلاَ كَفَارَةَ

"For whoever breaks his fast during Ramadhaan out of forgetfulness there is no making up of that day or expiation [upon him]."[3]

This hadith also implies that if a person has sexual intercourse with his wife due to forgetfulness, he does not violate his fast and does not have to make the day up later. This is the opinion of Abu Hanifah and al-Shafi'ee. However, on this point, Ahmad disagrees with them and says that in this case the person must make up that day later. There is even a narration from him that such a person must also perform the expiation for that act.[4] The hadith just quoted would be an argument against Ahmad on this issue, since it states, "Whoever breaks his fast...," implying breaking it out of forgetfulness in any way, whether by eating, drinking or having sexual intercourse with one's wife.

Making Acts or Stating Words of Unbelief While Under Duress

One may only resort to statements or actions of unbelief while under constraining coercion. Acts or statements of *kufr* (unbelief) are the greatest sins possible. Hence, the ruling concerning them must be much stricter than the rulings concerning eating pork, drinking alcohol and so forth. For example, if a person is threatened with a beating from which he does not fear death or if he only fears being ridiculed or abused, such is not enough for him to resort to acts or statements of *kufr*. Under circumstances of a lesser threat, one must remain patient and cannot resort to making statements or actions of unbelief.[1]

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[1] Commenting on this hadith, ibn al-Qayyim stated that the action is attributed to Allah. This is because the person himself did not mean or intend the act. Therefore, the person is not responsible for that act. Hence, the act of the one who forgets is like the what a person does in his sleep, while insane or before puberty. See Muhammad ibn al-Qayyim, *Ilaam al-Muwaqieen an Rabb al-Alameen* (Beirut: Daar al-Asriyyah, 1987), vol. 2, p. 32.

[2] It seems that Malik understands the above hadith to be in reference to voluntary fasts and not obligatory fasts. Cf., al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 336. It should also be noted that the analogy between the fast and prayers is not valid if it contradicts an explicit statement of the Prophet (peace be upon him), as is the case here.

[3] Recorded by al-Haakim. According to both ibn Hajr and al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Sanaani, *Subul al-Salaam Sharh Buloogh al-Maraam min Jama Adillah al-Ahkaam* (Beirut: Daar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1988), vol. 2, p. 325; al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 1048.

[4] Cf., al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 336.

If a person is forced to utter statements of unbelief, he should try to make an ambiguous statement that may only imply disbelief, making the one doing the coercing believe that he has stated words of disbelief.[2]

If the person is forced to utter statements of explicit unbelief, then he may make such statements with his tongue only while his heart is firm with faith. In such a case, he will not be held responsible for the words he has stated. Allah says in the Quran,

مَن كَفَرَ بِٱللَّهِ مِنۢ بَعۡدِ إِيمَٰنِهِۦٓ إِلَّا مَنۡ أُكۡرِهَ وَقَلۡبُهُۥ مُطۡمَئِنُّۢ بِٱلۡإِيمَٰنِ
وَلَٰكِن مَّن شَرَحَ بِٱلۡكُفۡرِ صَدۡرٗا فَعَلَيۡهِمۡ غَضَبٞ مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ وَلَهُمۡ عَذَابٌ
عَظِيمٞ

"Whoever disbelieves in Allah after his belief [shall earn the wrath of Allah] except for one who is forced [to renounce his religion] while his heart is secure in faith. But those who [willingly] open their breasts to disbelief, upon them is wrath from Allah, and for them is a great punishment" (*al-Nahl* 106).

There is some difference of opinion as to whether this concession is confined to only statements of unbelief or includes both statements and actions of unbelief. There seems to be general agreement, based on the Quranic verse above, someone may resort to making statements of unbelief as a way of saving his life. The difference of opinion is only concerning actions. For example, if someone were threatened with death unless he prostrated to an idol, would it then be permissible for him to make such a prostration?

It has been narrated from ibn Abbaas, Abu al-Aaliyah, Abu al-Shathaa, al-Rabee ibn Anas, al-Dhahhaak and Suhnoon that such deception can only be in statements and not in actions. This is also stated in one narration from Ahmad.[3]

Al-Hasan al-Basri was asked about a person who was told, "Prostrate to an idol or we will kill you." He replied, "If the idol were in the direction of the *qiblah*, then he should prostrate and make his intention for sake of Allah. If it is not in the direction of the *qiblah*, he should not do it, even if they kill him." However, ibn Atiyyah said, "What should prevent him from making his intention for Allah even if it is not in the direction of the *qiblah*? In the Book of Allah, it states, 'Any which way you turn, there is the Face of Allah' [*al-*

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[1] See Shaqra, p. 118.

[2] It should be noted that it is not always possible for someone to make such types of statements, especially while under a great deal of pressure.

[3] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 372.

Baqara 115]. In the Law, it is permissible for the traveler to perform voluntary prayers not in the direction of the *qiblah*.”[1]

It seems that there is no strong evidence to make a distinction between statements of unbelief and acts of unbelief while under constraining duress. Either of them may be resorted to in order to save one’s life as long as one’s heart is content and filled with true faith. Such seems to be the strongest conclusion and the opinion of the majority of the scholars.[2] Allah knows best.

Al-Bugha and Mistu point out that if the person can persevere and endure the harm coming to him, it is better for him not to utter any word of disbelief. If he dies due to refusing to utter words of disbelief, he will die as a martyr.[3] Shaqra states that there is a consensus on that point.[4]

There are many examples from the Makkan stage of the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him) that demonstrate that one is allowed to refuse to state words of unbelief even in the face of great torture. Such was the case with Bilaal ibn Ribaah, Suhaib al-Roomi, Saalim and others. The family of Yaasir was also greatly punished, with both parents dying due to the torture, but they refused to give into the demands of the unbelievers.

The following hadith also demonstrates the virtue of holding to the religion and not bowing down to the pressures to commit unbelief even in the face of death. During the early years of the message, when the Muslims were facing great hardship from the unbelievers, the Muslims complained to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said, “Shall you not seek help for us and pray for us [for our situation to change]?” The Prophet (peace be upon him) said in response,

قَدْ كَانَ مَنْ قَبْلَكُمْ يُؤْخَذُ الرَّجُلُ فَيُحْفَرُ لَهُ فِي الأَرْضِ فَيُجْعَلُ فِيهَا فَيُجَاءُ بِالْمِنْشَارِ
فَيُوضَعُ عَلَى رَأْسِهِ فَيُجْعَلُ نِصْفَيْنِ وَيُمْشَطُ بِأَمْشَاطِ الْحَدِيدِ مَا دُونَ لَحْمِهِ وَعَظْمِهِ فَمَا
يَصُدُّهُ ذَلِكَ عَنْ دِينِهِ وَاللَّهِ لَيَتِمَّنَّ هَذَا الأَمْرُ حَتَّى يَسِيرَ الرَّاكِبُ مِنْ صَنْعَاءَ إِلَى
حَضْرَمَوْتَ لَا يَخَافُ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَالذِّئْبَ عَلَى غَنَمِهِ وَلَكِنَّكُمْ تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ

“Among those who were before you, they would take a man and dig a ditch for him in the earth. They would put him in the ditch and then bring a saw and put it upon his head. They would cut him into two pieces. His flesh would be combed with iron combs and removed from his bones. However, all of that would not cause him to revert from his religion. By Allah, this matter will be completed until a traveler can ride from Sana to Hadhramaut and not fear anything except Allah and, concerning his sheep, the wolves. But you people are certainly hasty."

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[1] Both al-Hasan and ibn Atiyyah were quoted in ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 372.

[2] Cf., al-Jaboori, p. 495; Shaqra, p. 119.

[3] Al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 333.

[4] Shaqra, p. 121.

In *Sahih al-Bukhari*, al-Bukhari has a chapter entitled, "Whoever chooses beating, being killed and being disgraced over [being forced to commit] unbelief." The first hadith that he presents in that chapter is,

ثَلاثٌ مَنْ كُنَّ فِيهِ وَجَدَ حَلاوَةَ الإِيمَانِ أَنْ يَكُونَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْهِ مِمَّا سِوَاهُمَا وَأَنْ يُحِبَّ الْمَرْءَ لا يُحِبُّهُ إِلاَّ لِلَّهِ وَأَنْ يَكْرَهَ أَنْ يَعُودَ فِي الْكُفْرِ كَمَا يَكْرَهُ أَنْ يُقْذَفَ فِي النَّارِ

"[There are] three characteristics that if a person has them, he has tasted the sweetness of faith: that Allah and His Messenger are more beloved to him than anything else; that he loves a person and he only loves him for the sake of Allah; and that he hates to return to unbelief in the same way that he hates to be thrown into the Fire." Commenting on this hadith and al-Bukhari's placement of it in his *Sahih*, ibn Hajr wrote that the hadith equates returning to unbelief with being thrown into the Fire. Being beaten, killed or disgraced is easier upon a believer than being thrown into the Fire; hence, they must also be easier upon the believer than committing acts of unbelief.[1]

Someone may oppose that view by quoting what Allah has said in the Quran,

وَلَا تَقْتُلُوٓاْ أَنفُسَكُمْۚ

"Do not kill yourselves" (*al-Nisaa* 29). This verse would imply that one is not permitted to allow himself to be killed or to do the act that would lead to his own death. In *Fath al-Baari*, it is pointed out that these words are shortly followed with the words,

وَمَن يَفْعَلْ ذَٰلِكَ عُدْوَٰنًا وَظُلْمًا فَسَوْفَ نُصْلِيهِ نَارًاۚ

"And whoever does that in aggression and injustice, then We will drive him into a Fire" (*al-Nisaa* 30). The one who has his soul killed for the sake of Allah is not one who has done such an act in aggression and injustice.[2]

Therefore, this case is an example of a *rukhsah* or concession wherein one is allowed to opt for the concession but it is considered preferable not to do so. If he does not opt for the concession, he will receive a great reward from Allah.

Al-Suyooti points out that the above ruling must be considered the general case. It is possible for there to be a situation in which it would be considered better for the person to opt for the concession instead of being killed. If the person being threatened is someone needed in the fight against the disbelievers or in establishing the *shareeah*, it would be best for him not to opt for death. This would be the case if he were, for example, the only scholar and only one able to lead the Muslims. In that case, the interest of the general public takes precedence over his personal interest of attaining martyrdom.[1] Allah knows best.

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[1] Ibn Hajr, *Fath*, (Daar al-Baaz), vol. 12, p. 391.

[2] Ibn Hajr, *Fath* (Daar al-Baaz), vol. 12, p. 391.

Al-Jaboori, on the other hand, points out the opposite exception to the general ruling. He cites the case of a person who is followed by the masses and they look to him as their leader. If that person were to opt for the concession of stating words of unbelief, it may be confusing to the people and they may not understand what is going on. They may think their religious leader weak or hypocritical for rejecting faith under pressure. Therefore, due to the harm and confusion that would result in this case, that person would not be allowed to take the concession. Instead, he must remain firm, both outwardly and inwardly, even if he were killed.[2]

It should also be noted that there is a hadith which states,

لا تُشْرِكُوا بِاللهِ وإِنْ قُطِّعْتُم وحُرِّقْتُم

"Do not associate partners with Allah even if you are torn to pieces or set on fire."[3] Ibn Rajab explains this hadith by stating that it is in reference to the true associating of partners with one's heart.[4] In other words, it is not in reference to outwardly showing an act or statement of unbelief while one's heart is firm in belief.

Being Coerced to Kill Another Muslim

It is absolutely forbidden to intentionally kill another Muslim except as the result of due process of Islamic law. This is agreed upon, and may be established through a number of evidences from the Quran and sunnah, including Hadith #14 of this present collection.

The following question now must be posed: Is one allowed to kill another Muslim when his own life is threatened or when the life of his family is threatened with death or imprisonment? It seems that there is a virtual consensus on the answer to this question: It is not allowed for one Muslim to save his life or the life of his family members by intentionally killing another

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[1] Al-Suyooti, *al-Ashbaah*, p. 227.

[2] Al-Jaboori, p. 495.

[3] This hadith, with variant wordings, has been recorded by al-Bukhari in *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, ibn Maajah and al-Tabaraani. According to al-Arnaoot (footnotes to ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 373), the hadith is *hasan*, while according to al-Albaani (*Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 1226), it is *sahih*.

[4] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 373.

Muslim. This is because a Muslim has no more right to live than the Muslim he is going to kill. Hence, even though there is a case of coercion, he must accept his own fate from the one doing the coercing. It is forbidden for him to kill another Muslim. If he does so, he will definitely be considered a sinner.[1] Even being threatened with the death of many members of one's own family is not a valid excuse to intentionally kill another Muslim.[2]

The killing of another Muslim is an example of an act that is still forbidden for a Muslim even under coercion. He is not excused due to the presence of the coercion. Al-Qurtubi wrote in his commentary of the Quran,

> The people of knowledge agree that if one is being coerced to kill another person, it is not allowed for him to go forward and kill him or to violate his rights by flogging him or otherwise. He must be patient and bear what is going to come to him. It is not allowed for him to save his own soul by somebody else's. He should ask Allah for safety in both this life and the Hereafter.[3]

The only difference of opinion among the scholars surrounding this issue is concerning to whom the law of retribution ("a life for a life") will be applied.

According to Malik, Ahmad and the clearest of the two narrations from al-Shafi'ee, the law of retribution is to be applied to both the one doing the coercing and the coerced. This is because they jointly share the responsibility for the killing: one as the cause and the other as the direct doer. The one doing the coercing is like a person who pushes another person into a pit of lions, being certain that the lions would eat him alive. Obviously, although he did not actually do the killing, he was the cause of the killing and must be punished. As for the coerced, he is wrongfully giving himself preference over another person and willfully taking the life of the other person and, hence, he also must be punished.[4]

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[1] Cf., al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 339.

[2] One can only reflect upon what would be the results of this ruling if it were actually applied among Muslims of the Twentieth Century. In this century, there have been many Islamically unjustified wars between Muslims. In many cases, the only way the ruler could get his Muslim citizens to fight in such wars was by threatening a person or his family with death or imprisonment. By this means, unjust tyrants have been able to gather large armies and inflict a great deal of injury and destruction to other Muslim populations. Indeed, most soldiers nowadays do not simply kill one other person but drop bombs, launch rockets, throw grenades, and so forth, killing numerous Muslims at a time. If those soldiers had realized— or acted upon the fact— that even under such coercion it is sinful for them to kill other Muslims and they will be held responsible for their acts, they would have refused to enter into such wars. If this happened such unjust rulers would be forced to kill off their own citizenry who refused to bow to their pressures, and this would weaken their own power. Such is part of the benefit of this important principle discussed above.

[3] al-Qurtubi, *al-Jaami li-Ahkaam al-Quraan*, vol. 10, p. 183.

[4] Cf., al-Jaboori, p. 489.

For Abu Hanifah, his student Muhammad and a second opinion attributed to al-Shafi'ee, the law of retribution is applied only to the one doing the coercing. This is because the coerced is simply like an instrument and cannot be held completely responsible for his act. Furthermore, they argue that a person is naturally inclined to want to preserve his life. Under such pressure, it is understandable that he may resort to such an objectionable act.

Yet a third opinion is that the retribution is to be imposed on the one doing the act of killing only. This is because he was the one directly responsible for the death and could not be considered simply an instrument. He has on his own willfully committed the act in order to save his own life. Furthermore, all the scholars agree that he has committed a sin and, therefore, the penalty should be on him for the sinful act he committed. This is the opinion of Zufar (the student of Abu Hanifah) and another opinion attributed to al-Shafi'ee.[1]

Abu Yusuf was of the opinion that there is no retribution to be meted out in this case. This is because the "cause" of the act (the one doing the coercing) did not perform actually the act, and the doer was under coercion, which is enough of a complicating matter as to remove the prescribed punishment from him. Hence, according to Abu Yusuf, there is only blood money to be paid.[2]

It seems that the strongest opinion is the first one stated above, from Ahmad and Malik. The evidence for it seems to be the strongest. The end result of that opinion should be the most positive.

Being Coerced to Break One's Fast While Traveling

If a person is traveling during Ramadhaan, it is permissible for him to break his fast. Therefore, if he is fasting while traveling and his life is threatened with such words as, "We will kill you unless you break your fast," it then becomes obligatory upon him to break his fast in order to save his life. If he does not break his fast in this case, he will be considered a sinner, because saving his life takes precedence over his permissible, non-obligatory act of continuing his fasting.[3] However, this has more to do with principles relating to the law of necessity than with this particular hadith, "Allah has pardoned..."

In any case, this is an example of an act that becomes obligatory due to coercion.

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[1] Cf., al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 339; al-Jaboori, p. 490.

[2] Cf., al-Jaboori, p. 489.

[3] Cf., Shaqra, p. 141.

Some Conclusions

Before ending the discussion of this hadith, a number of important conclusions should be highlighted:

(a) The correct wording of this hadith is, and Allah knows best, "Allah has pardoned for my Nation [what is done] mistakenly, out of forgetfulness or under duress."

(b) The concept of *umoom al-muqtadhaa* in itself is a controversial topic. The Hanafis uniformly reject the concept. It is a concept that is often times attributed to al-Shafi'ee. However, he himself never seemed to have referred to such a concept. Among the followers of the Shafi'ee school, many of the leading legal theorists also reject the application of such a concept. If the concept of *umoom al-muqtadhaa* is rejected, it means that this hadith, "Allah has pardoned..." is only in reference to the sinfulness of the act and recompense in the Hereafter. This hadith cannot be invoked, then, concerning any worldly ruling, such as a mistake made in the prayer, a transaction done under coercion and so forth. All of those worldly rulings must be governed by some texts or principles other than the hadith under discussion here.

(c) For those who do accept *umoom al-muqtadhaa* and apply it to this hadith, they must realize the implications of such an understanding of this hadith. The fact that what is done by mistake, out of forgetfulness or under coercion is overlooked now becomes something directly concluded from this text (hadith). It cannot be overruled by analogy on the basis of any other text. It cannot only be overruled for specific issues by specific texts concerning those specific issues. In other words, those scholars cannot have it both ways. They cannot say that this hadith applies to both sin and worldly ruling and then overrule its worldly ruling on the basis of weaker evidences.

(d) After a detailed review of the scholarly commentaries on this hadith, this author is of the definite conclusion that this hadith, "Allah has pardoned..." is in reference to the sin of the act only— the fact that Allah will not punish a person for a wrong act done due to forgetfulness, by mistake or under coercion. As for the worldly rulings concerning acts done by mistake, out of forgetfulness or coercion, the conclusions concerning them must be sought from other sources as this particular hadith is completely irrelevant to such questions.

(e) It is extremely important that the scholar be absolutely certain as to whether he accepts the idea that this hadith refers to the sin only or both the sin and the worldly ruling. Then he must be consistent in his application of this hadith. It seems that many jurists of the past were not consistent in their application of their understanding of this hadith.

(f) If a person does something by mistake, he is not sinful. Furthermore, if that mistake were related to an act of worship and the result of *ijtihaad* and striving to find what is correct, the person need not repeat that act of worship if he determines later that he was incorrect in his *ijtihaad*.[1] If a judge or *mufti* makes such *ijtihaad* and is mistaken, no sin is to be implied to him nor is he to be held responsible for the ramifications of his sincere *ijtihaad* (unless he was not qualified to make *ijtihaad* in the first place).

(g) If a person completely fails to perform an act of worship due to forgetfulness, he performs the act when he recalls it. This is based on an analogy with the one who has forgotten a prayer, that is explicitly discussed in a hadith.

(h) If a person forgets one aspect of an act or violates an act that he is performing out of forgetfulness, the question becomes more difficult. There is some evidence to show that this is overlooked and has no effect, such as in the case of the one who spoke in the prayer or the one who ate during his fast. Allah knows best. (Another approach is to discover whether or not there were factors that should have prevented him from forgetting something. If such factors were present, the act done due to forgetfulness is not overlooked. If such factors were not present, then the act done due to forgetfulness is overlooked.)

(i) Under coercion, if a person performs an act that has become a concession for him while under coercion, he may perform that act and it (and its implications) will not be ascribed to him. (The view of the Hanafis, which is more complex than this, was also presented earlier.)

(j) Under coercion, if a person performs an act that is still forbidden for him to perform even while under coercion, he will be a sinner and the act will be ascribed to him. He will share in the responsibility for the act he has committed.

Summary of the Hadith

- By Allah's mercy, He has decreed that He will overlook for the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) followers what they do by mistake, out of forgetfulness or due to coercion.
- This means that Allah forgives any sinful aspect of those deeds but it does not mean that the worldly rulings concerning those deeds are to be overlooked.

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[1] There were numerous cases during the lifetime of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in which people performed such acts on the basis of mistaken *ijtihaad* and there is no record of the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordering them to re-perform their acts later.

Hadith #40
"Be in the World like a Stranger..."

عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ رَضِي اللَّهم عَنْهُمَا قَالَ أَخَذَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى
الله عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بِمَنْكِبِي فَقَالَ كُنْ فِي الدُّنْيَا كَأَنَّكَ غَرِيبٌ
أَوْ عَابِرُ سَبِيلٍ وَكَانَ ابْنُ عُمَرَ يَقُولُ إِذَا أَمْسَيْتَ فَلا تَنْتَظِرِ
الصَّبَاحَ وَإِذَا أَصْبَحْتَ فَلا تَنْتَظِرِ الْمَسَاءَ وَخُذْ مِنْ صِحَّتِكَ
لِمَرَضِكَ وَمِنْ حَيَاتِكَ لِمَوْتِكَ

رَوَاهُ الْبُخَارِي

On the authority of ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with both of them, who said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) took hold of my shoulder and said, "Be in the world as if you were a stranger or a traveler along a path." And ibn Umar would say, "If you survive till the late afternoon, do not expect [to be alive in] the morning. If you survive till the morning, do not expect [to be alive in] the late afternoon. Take from your health for your sickness and from your life for your death." Recorded by al-Bukhari.

Selected Vocabulary

أخذ - "took," when the following word starts with ب, as in this case, it means, "took hold of"
منكبي - "my shoulder," the ي at the end implies the possessive, "my"
كن - "[You should] be"
الدنيا - "the life of this world"
كأنك - "as if you were"
غريب - "a stranger"
عابر سبيل - "a traveler, someone passing along a way"
أمسيت - "being at or catching the late-afternoon time, alive at late afternoon time"
تنتظر - "you expect, wait for"
الصباح - "the morning"
أصبحت - "being at or catching the morning time, alive at morning time"
المساء - "late afternoon, from afternoon until sunset"

خذ	- "[you] take"
صحّتك	- "your health," the ك at the end gives the meaning of, "your"
لمرضك	- "for your sickness," the ل corresponds to, "for"
حياتك	- "your life" the ك at the end gives the meaning of, "your"
لموتك	- "for your death" the ل corresponds to, "for"

Takhreej

This is an authentic hadith. It was recorded by al-Bukhari, al-Baihaqi, ibn al-Mubaarak in *al-Zuhd*, al-Baghawi, al-Shihaab in his *Musnad* and ibn Hibbaan. There is some question about the chain used by al-Bukhari. He quotes al-Amash as saying, "Mujaahid narrated to me." Other scholars have noted that in separate narrations, the wording is, "on the authority of Mujaahid." Those scholars claim that al-Amash did not hear this hadith directly from Mujaahid but from an intermediary source, al-Laith ibn Abu Sulaim, who was a weak narrator. Ibn Hajr has replied to the objections surrounding that chain by pointing out that Ali ibn al-Madeeni has narrated it with al-Amash clearly stating that he heard the hadith directly from Mujaahid and that the hadith has supporting evidence in another narration recorded by al-Nasaai.[1]

Ahmad, al-Tirmidhi, ibn Maajah and al-Tabaraani also record this hadith with the additional words of the Prophet (peace be upon him),

وَعُدَّ نَفْسَكَ فِي أَهْلِ الْقُبُورِ

"Count yourself among the inhabitants of the grave." According to ibn Muhammad, these additional words are narrated only by Laith ibn Abu Sulaim. According to ibn Hajr, Laith was honest but then he began to confuse his narrations and hadith, to the extent that one cannot determine which of his hadith are sound. Then ibn Muhammad points out that these additional words have supporting evidence in hadith from Abu Huraira, Abu al-Darda and Muaadh. But, as ibn Muhammad further points out, all of those narrations are weak.[2] Al-Albaani, on the other hand, includes these additional words in his *Sahih Sunan al-Tirmidhi* and he discusses the hadith in detail in *Silsilat al-Ahadeeth al-Saheeha.*[3]

Al-Tirmidhi also has the additional words in ibn Umar's statement,

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[1] Ibn Hajr, *Fath*, vol. 13, p. 9.

[2] Ibn Muhammad, p. 223.

[3] See al-Albaani, *Sahih Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, vol. 2, p. 272; al-Albaani, *Silsilat al-Ahadeeth al-Saheeha*, vol. 3, pp. 147-148. This hadith and these additional words are also discussed in detail by Abdul Rahmaan al-Farayawaai in his footnotes to Waki ibn al-Jaraah, *Kitaab al-Zuhd* (Riyadh: Daar al-Sami'ee, 1994), vol. 1, pp. 230-233. Al-Farayawaai comes to the same conclusion as al-Albaani.

فَإِنَّكَ لا تَدْرِي يَا عَبْدَ اللَّهِ مَا اسْمُكَ غَدًا

"For certainly, you do not know, O servant of Allah, what your name will be tomorrow."

General Comments About the Hadith

This hadith is truly profound in meaning, with far-reaching implications. If one ponders over the meaning of this hadith and applies it correctly, it could lead him to a great deal of good, as this worldly life can be a great threat to a life of piety. This hadith is a vivid reminder of the real nature of this world. The believer who understands and implements this hadith will find himself high above this worldly life rather than a slave to it.

Echoing some of those points, Sultan wrote about this hadith,

> How many legally responsible humans have had the world as an impediment in their path to adhering to the commands of the religion. How many such humans have had their hearts filled with the love for this world to the point that they become slaves to it and its people. And how many such humans have sold their religion, conscience and people due to it. Therefore, the Messenger of Islam (peace be upon him) clarified how the human should be in this world so that he may pass on from this world in safety to the abode of safety.[1]

About the Narrator: Abdullah ibn Umar

Abdullah ibn Umar was discussed in the commentary to Hadith #3.

"Took hold of my shoulder"

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) took hold of ibn Umar's shoulder. It seems clear that the purpose of that act— and this demonstrates how important is every aspect of the Prophet's teaching and example— was to get ibn Umar's complete attention. Ibn Umar would then understand that he is about to be told something very important. He will remember the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) grabbing his shoulder and will thus be able to recall what the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) told him at that time.

This demonstrates that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) not only conveyed the message, but he conveyed it in the best way possible. He conveyed it in such a way that the people would understand and remember it. Numerous teaching techniques can be derived from the acts of the Prophet

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[1] Sultaan, p. 350.

(peace be upon him). For example, in another hadith, one can find the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) striking Abdullah ibn Masood, another young Companion, in order to get his complete attention as he was about to tell him something of great importance.

These examples of the Prophet (peace be upon him) are important lessons for anyone who wishes to carry on the Prophet's role of conveying this religion to others. If one wishes to benefit others with advice, the matter is not simply the information presented but it is also the manner of presentation. The best manner is that which is in accordance with the sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him).

Al-Bugha and Mistu wrote,

> The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) was a teacher and *murabbi*[1] for his Companions. Many of the methods of teaching that today's experts are discussing were already implemented by the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). He would take advantage of specific occasions and opportunities. He would state parables for them, taking meanings from a theoretical level to the level of what they witnessed and experienced. He would give them admonitions and speeches according to the need. He would be aware of their understanding and would carefully observe their deeds, approving of what was correct and correcting what was wrong. All of that was done in the manner of an example *par excellence*, with patience, perseverance and watchfulness.[2]

It is clear from ibn Umar's own advice after relating this hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he did understand and retain what the Prophet (peace be upon him) had taught him. That is, the teaching method of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was successful.

At the time of the Prophet's death, ibn Umar was, at the most, about twenty years of age. As was mentioned in the commentary to Hadith #19, in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave the young ibn Abbaas some very important and profound words of instruction, one should take note of how the Prophet (peace be upon him) took special care in teaching the younger Companions. He brought them up with the clear teachings of Islam such that they would learn its message at an early age and develop and grow in the shade of that message.

Perhaps, also, the Prophet (peace be upon him) knew by inspiration that these young Companions would be the future propagators and teachers of the faith. The elder Companions, for the most part, would die while the majority of the population were still Companions. These younger Companions would live to see the days of new people embracing Islam, people who needed to be taught their religion. These younger Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) did in fact play a great role in the preservation and propagation of the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

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[1] A *murabbi* is an educator as well as one who brings up another.

[2] Al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 343. For more details on this matter, see Fuad al-Shalhoob, *al-Muallim al-Awwal* (Riyadh: Daar al-Qaasim, 1417 A.H.), *passim.*

"Be in the World..."

The Prophet (peace be upon him) explained to ibn Umar (and, thus to all believers) how he should be with respect to this world. This world is referred to in Arabic as *al-dunya*. As noted earlier, linguistically, *dunya* comes from a root meaning both closeness and something despicable or lowly. This world is called *dunya* for two reasons: First, at the present time, it is closer (*adnaa*) to the humans than the Hereafter. Second, it is despicable or abased (*daneeah*) in comparison to the Hereafter.[1]

This hadith is a clear sign that a true believer does not put his aspirations and heart into this world. This world is not his real home. Instead, on his mind is that he is moving toward his real destination, real home and real resting place. He will not plant his heart and mind too firmly in this earth. His love, thoughts and motive are for a completely different world and existence.

Among the implications here is that if the believer loses anything of this world or is not able to attain something of this world, it will not have a great effect on his heart and emotions. He is not like the disbelievers who in reality and practice— although they may claim to believe otherwise— have nothing to live for but this life. If they face some difficulty in this life, they are sometimes even willing to kill themselves due to their depression and lack of having anything else to look forward to. It is a well-known fact that after the famous stock market crash of 1929, many Americans and others throughout the world committed suicide as their whole world— everything and all that they had lived for— came crumbling down around them.

The Nature of This Worldly Life as Demonstrated in the Quran and Sunnah

It is only those who are deceived by the glitter they see around them who become engrossed in this world and desire it till their deaths. When a person realizes the true nature of this world, as taught in the Quran and sunnah, it becomes very easy for him to become "detached" from this world and to deal with it in the proper way. In order to help the reader achieve that realization, verses of Quran and hadith that demonstrate the reality of this world shall be presented here. They shall be presented with a minimum of commentary.[2] The hoped for result is that the reader will realize why, in fact, he should become like a stranger or a traveler with respect to this world, as mentioned in this hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

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[1] Cf., ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 6, pp. 6-7.

[2] For a more comprehensive presentation of this topic, the interested reader may consult Muhammad Shaumaan al-Ramli, *Mathal al-Hayaat al-Dunyaa fi al-Kitaab wa al-Sunnah wa Kalaam al-Ulamaa* (al-Khobar, Saudi Arabia: Daar ibn Affaan, 1995), *passim.* In the Quran, Allah states parables and metaphors to give the believer a clear picture of what this world is

Allah says in the Quran,

ٱعْلَمُوٓا۟ أَنَّمَا ٱلْحَيَوٰةُ ٱلدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهْوٌ وَزِينَةٌ وَتَفَاخُرٌۢ بَيْنَكُمْ وَتَكَاثُرٌ فِى
ٱلْأَمْوَٰلِ وَٱلْأَوْلَٰدِ ۖ كَمَثَلِ غَيْثٍ أَعْجَبَ ٱلْكُفَّارَ نَبَاتُهُۥ ثُمَّ يَهِيجُ فَتَرَىٰهُ
مُصْفَرًّا ثُمَّ يَكُونُ حُطَٰمًا ۖ وَفِى ٱلْأَخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ
وَرِضْوَٰنٌ ۚ وَمَا ٱلْحَيَوٰةُ ٱلدُّنْيَآ إِلَّا مَتَٰعُ ٱلْغُرُورِ

“Know that the life of this world is but amusement and diversion and adornment and boasting to one another and competition in increase of wealth and children. [In reality, it is] like the example of a rain whose [resulting] plant growth pleases the disbelievers.[1] When it dries and you see it turn yellow, and then it becomes [scattered] debris. And in the Hereafter is severe punishment and forgiveness from Allah and approval. And what is the worldly life except the enjoyment of delusion” (*al-Hadeed* 20).

Other verses also state emphatically that this life is nothing but play, amusement and diversion from what is more important. Note the following verses:

وَمَا ٱلْحَيَوٰةُ ٱلدُّنْيَآ إِلَّا لَعِبٌ وَلَهْوٌ ۖ وَلَلدَّارُ ٱلْأَخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ ۗ أَفَلَا
تَعْقِلُونَ

“And the worldly life is not but amusement and diversion. But the home of the Hereafter is best for those who fear Allah. So will you not then reason?” (*al-Anaam* 32).

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really all about. As al-Raazi pointed out, the goal of the parables is to affect the hearts in a way more profound than a simple description of the thing itself would produce. However, these parables will not be understood and benefited from except by people who study and understand them. Allah says, “And these examples [or parables] We present to the people but none will understand them except those of knowledge” (*al-Ankaboot* 43). These parables discuss some of the most important questions related to life. Hence, those who do not reflect upon these parables and take the time to understand them cannot be considered among the people of knowledge. Cf., al-Raazi, *Tafseer*, vol. 2, p. 80; al-Ramli, pp. 6-7.

[1] The word, *al-kufaar*, could be understood to mean, “tillers, farmers”. However, some commentators prefer to understand it to mean, “unbelievers.” This is because it is the unbelievers, in general, who are most pleased with this world. In fact, this is truly the only world that many of them are living for. Cf., al-Ramli, p. 13.

وَمَا هَٰذِهِ ٱلۡحَيَوٰةُ ٱلدُّنۡيَآ إِلَّا لَهۡوٞ وَلَعِبٞۚ وَإِنَّ ٱلدَّارَ ٱلۡأٓخِرَةَ لَهِيَ
ٱلۡحَيَوَانُۚ لَوۡ كَانُواْ يَعۡلَمُونَ

"And this worldly life is not but diversion and amusement. And, indeed, the home of the Hereafter, that is the [true and eternal] life, if only they knew" (*al-Ankaboot* 64).

إِنَّمَا ٱلۡحَيَوٰةُ ٱلدُّنۡيَا لَعِبٞ وَلَهۡوٞۚ وَإِن تُؤۡمِنُواْ وَتَتَّقُواْ يُؤۡتِكُمۡ أُجُورَكُمۡ وَلَا
يَسۡـَٔلۡكُمۡ أَمۡوَٰلَكُمۡ

"This worldly life is only amusement and diversion. And if you believe and fear Allah, He will give you your reward and not ask you for your wealth" (*Muhammad* 36).

Ibn al-Qayyim points out that play, amusement and diversion have no real purpose or benefit. They are simply things that occupy the soul and causes it to waste its time and not involve itself in more important matters. The ignorant people spend their whole lives in pursuit of such vain activities without any benefit for themselves in the Hereafter.[1]

Allah has also described this world as *zeenah* (something alluring, beautiful, attractive). Therefore, the eyes and physical self find it good and worthy of love. However, if the heart were aware of its reality, what dangers it can present for one's religion and relationship with Allah and what over indulgence in it leads to, the world would become displeasing to it and the heart would then concentrate on the Hereafter.[2]

Allah also says about this worldly life,

إِنَّمَا مَثَلُ ٱلۡحَيَوٰةِ ٱلدُّنۡيَا كَمَآءٍ أَنزَلۡنَٰهُ مِنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ فَٱخۡتَلَطَ بِهِۦ نَبَاتُ
ٱلۡأَرۡضِ مِمَّا يَأۡكُلُ ٱلنَّاسُ وَٱلۡأَنۡعَٰمُ حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَآ أَخَذَتِ ٱلۡأَرۡضُ زُخۡرُفَهَا
وَٱزَّيَّنَتۡ وَظَنَّ أَهۡلُهَآ أَنَّهُمۡ قَٰدِرُونَ عَلَيۡهَآ أَتَىٰهَآ أَمۡرُنَا لَيۡلًا أَوۡ نَهَارٗا
فَجَعَلۡنَٰهَا حَصِيدٗا كَأَن لَّمۡ تَغۡنَ بِٱلۡأَمۡسِۚ كَذَٰلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ ٱلۡأٓيَٰتِ لِقَوۡمٖ
يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

"The example of this worldly life is but like rain which We have sent down from the sky that the plants of the earth absorb— those from which men and livestock eat— until, when the earth has taken on its adornment and is beautified and its people suppose that they have power over it, there comes to it Our command by night or by day, and We make it as a harvest [cut down and gone], as if it had not flourished just beforehand. Thus do We explain in detail the signs for a people who give thought" (*Yoonus* 24).

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[1] Quoted in al-Ramli, p. 12.
[2] Cf., al-Ramli, p. 12.

In a similar verse, Allah says,

وَٱضۡرِبۡ لَهُم مَّثَلَ ٱلۡحَيَوٰةِ ٱلدُّنۡيَا كَمَآءٍ أَنزَلۡنَٰهُ مِنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ فَٱخۡتَلَطَ بِهِۦ
نَبَاتُ ٱلۡأَرۡضِ فَأَصۡبَحَ هَشِيمٗا تَذۡرُوهُ ٱلرِّيَٰحُۗ وَكَانَ ٱللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيۡءٖ
مُّقۡتَدِرًا ﴿٤٥﴾ ٱلۡمَالُ وَٱلۡبَنُونَ زِينَةُ ٱلۡحَيَوٰةِ ٱلدُّنۡيَاۖ وَٱلۡبَٰقِيَٰتُ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتُ خَيۡرٌ
عِندَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابٗا وَخَيۡرٌ أَمَلٗا

"And present to them the example of the life of this world: [It is] like rain which We send down from the sky, and the vegetation of the earth mingles with it and [then] it becomes dry remnants, scattered by the winds. And Allah is ever perfect in ability over all things. Wealth and children are [but] adornment of the worldly life. But the enduring good deeds are better with your Lord and better for [one's] hope" (*al-Kahf* 45-46).

Allah also says,

بَلۡ تُؤۡثِرُونَ ٱلۡحَيَوٰةَ ٱلدُّنۡيَا ﴿١٦﴾ وَٱلۡأٓخِرَةُ خَيۡرٞ وَأَبۡقَىٰٓ

"But you prefer the worldly life while the Hereafter is better and more lasting" (*al-'Alaa* 16-17).

This world can get the person so engrossed that he forgets the Hereafter. He gets deceived into believing that the goals of this life are worth living for even if it means that one neglects his duties toward Allah. These are some of the ways by which Satan seduces man and makes him forget about his real purpose. For such a person, Allah has stated clear words of reminder:

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ إِنَّ وَعۡدَ ٱللَّهِ حَقّٞۖ فَلَا تَغُرَّنَّكُمُ ٱلۡحَيَوٰةُ ٱلدُّنۡيَاۖ وَلَا يَغُرَّنَّكُم
بِٱللَّهِ ٱلۡغَرُورُ

"O mankind, indeed, the promise of Allah is true, so let not the worldly life delude you and be not deceived about Allah by the deceiver [Satan]" (*Faatir* 5).

Muslim records a hadith that states that the Prophet (peace be upon him) passed by a dead goat which had either very small ears or mutilated ears. The Prophet (peace be upon him) took it and said to his Companions, "Which of you would like to have this for one *dirham*?" They said, "We do not desire it. What would we use it for?" The Prophet again said, "Would you like to have it for your own?" They said, "By Allah, even if it were alive, we would find it defective, since it has small ears; what do you think now that it is dead?" The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) then told them,

فَوَاللَّهِ لَلدُّنْيَا أَهْوَنُ عَلَى اللَّهِ مِنْ هَذَا عَلَيْكُمْ

"By Allah, the world is more insignificant to Allah than that [dead goat] is to you."

In another hadith, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

لَوْ كَانَتِ الدُّنْيَا تَعْدِلُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ جَنَاحَ بَعُوضَةٍ مَا سَقَى كَافِرًا مِنْهَا شَرْبَةَ مَاءٍ

"If this worldly life were equivalent in Allah's sight to even a wing of a mosquito, He would not have given a disbeliever even a drink of water in it."[1] An unbeliever is an enemy to Allah and the enemy should not be given anything of real value. But the unbeliever is given plenty of this world, implying that a world void of faith and good deeds is of no real value whatsoever.

In the Quran, Allah has made it clear that He will give this world to whoever He wills, believer or disbeliever; such worldly possessions are not of great importance. However, the Hereafter, which is the true bounty and the matter of great importance, He reserves only for His believers and those whom He is pleased with. Allah has said, for example,

مَّن كَانَ يُرِيدُ ٱلۡعَاجِلَةَ عَجَّلۡنَا لَهُۥ فِيهَا مَا نَشَآءُ لِمَن نُّرِيدُ ثُمَّ جَعَلۡنَا
لَهُۥ جَهَنَّمَ يَصۡلَىٰهَا مَذۡمُومٗا مَّدۡحُورٗا ﴿١٨﴾ وَمَنۡ أَرَادَ ٱلۡأٓخِرَةَ وَسَعَىٰ لَهَا
سَعۡيَهَا وَهُوَ مُؤۡمِنٞ فَأُوْلَٰٓئِكَ كَانَ سَعۡيُهُم مَّشۡكُورٗا

"Whoever should desire the immediate [worldly life], We hasten for him from it what We will to whom We intend. Then We have made for him Hell, which he will [enter to] burn, censured and banished. But whoever desires the Hereafter and exerts the effort due to it while he is a believer, it is those whose effort is ever appreciated [by Allah]" (*al-Israa* 18-19).

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) also said,

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[1] Recorded by al-Tirmidhi and others. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 937.

إِنَّ مَطْعَمَ ابْنِ آدَمَ ضُرِبَ لِلدُّنْيَا مَثَلاً بِمَا خَرَجَ مِنِ ابْنِ آدَمَ وَإِنْ قَزَّحَهُ وَمَلَّحَهُ فَانْظُرْ مَا
يَصِيْرُ إِلَيْهِ

"The food of humans strikes a parable of this worldly life: From what comes out of humans [as waste], even after they had seasoned it and added salt to it [and made it very tasty], look at what it ends up as."[1] In other words, even though humans work very hard to make the food taste excellent, the food finally results in something that is very disgusting and distasteful. The same is true for this world and all of its glitter. It will all end in destruction and waste.[2]

Muslim recorded that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

وَاللَّهِ مَا الدُّنْيَا فِي الآخِرَةِ إِلاَّ مِثْلُ مَا يَجْعَلُ أَحَدُكُمْ إِصْبَعَهُ هَذِهِ فِي الْيَمِّ فَلْيَنْظُرْ بِمَ
تَرْجِعُ

"By Allah, [the bounties and length of] this world with respect to the Hereafter are not but as if one were to put this finger into the ocean and see with what it comes out [compared to what it leaves in the ocean]."

The Prophet (peace be upon him) has shown very contrasting pictures of those people who give up this life for the Hereafter (and suffer with patience and control their desires) and those who devour this life and neglect the Hereafter. All of the harm and all of the supposed joy that the people faced in this world will be forgotten because of their new experience in the Hereafter. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) stated,

يُؤْتَى بِأَنْعَمِ أَهْلِ الدُّنْيَا مِنْ أَهْلِ النَّارِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَيُصْبَغُ فِي النَّارِ صَبْغَةً ثُمَّ يُقَالُ يَا ابْنَ
آدَمَ هَلْ رَأَيْتَ خَيْرًا قَطُّ هَلْ مَرَّ بِكَ نَعِيمٌ قَطُّ فَيَقُولُ لا وَاللَّهِ يَا رَبِّ وَيُؤْتَى بِأَشَدِّ النَّاسِ
بُؤْسًا فِي الدُّنْيَا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ فَيُصْبَغُ صَبْغَةً فِي الْجَنَّةِ فَيُقَالُ لَهُ يَا ابْنَ آدَمَ هَلْ رَأَيْتَ
بُؤْسًا قَطُّ هَلْ مَرَّ بِكَ شِدَّةٌ قَطُّ فَيَقُولُ لا وَاللَّهِ يَا رَبِّ مَا مَرَّ بِي بُؤْسٌ قَطُّ وَلا رَأَيْتُ
شِدَّةً قَطُّ

"The person of the [to be] inhabitants of the Hell-fire who received the most bounties of the people of this world will be brought on the Day of Resurrection and dipped once into Hell. It will be said to him, 'O son of Adam, have you ever seen any good at all [in your life]? Did you ever enjoy any blessings at all?' He will answer, 'No, by Allah.' And the person of the [to be] inhabitants of Paradise who faced the greatest hardships of the people of this world will be brought and dipped once into Paradise. It will be said to him, 'O son of Adam, did you ever see any hardship at all [in your life]? Did you ever face any difficulties?' He will say, 'No, by Allah, O Lord, I never experienced any hardships at all and I never saw any difficulties at all.'" (Recorded by Muslim.)

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[1] Recorded by ibn Hibbaan. According to al-Albaani, it is *hasan.* See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 1, pp. 437-438.

[2] Cf., al-Ramli, pp. 42-3.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said,

وَاللَّهِ مَا الْفَقْرَ أَخْشَى عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَكِنِّي أَخْشَى أَنْ تُبْسَطَ عَلَيْكُمُ الدُّنْيَا كَمَا بُسِطَتْ عَلَى
مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ فَتَنَافَسُوهَا كَمَا تَنَافَسُوهَا وَتُهْلِكَكُمْ كَمَا أَهْلَكَتْهُمْ

"By Allah, it is not poverty that I fear for you. But I fear that this world will be spread out for you [and given to you in abundance] as it was spread out for the peoples before you, and then you will compete in it as they competed in it and it will destroy you as it destroyed them." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.) Commenting on this hadith, the modern day scholar ibn Uthaimeen explains that poverty or being poor allows one to be closer to following the truth than being rich. Indeed, most of the people who followed the Prophet (peace be upon him), especially in the early years, were from among the poor. Throughout history, most of the people who rejected the messengers were the rich and arrogant. He goes on to say,

> That is what is happening. Look at our situation. When the people were closer to being poor,[1] they were more conscious and fearful of Allah. When the wealth increased and became abundant, more and more people starting turning away from the path of Allah and oppression started. Nowadays, people long for the glitter and attractions of this world, of cars, houses, furniture, clothing. And they boast to others about all those things. And they turn away from what is beneficial for them in the Hereafter. The newspapers and magazines only talk about luxurious living and what is related to this world. They turn people away from the Hereafter and ruin them, except for those whom Allah wills.[2]

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said,

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[1] Implying, before all of the oil money and other riches that have come to the Muslim world in recent decades.

[2] Ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 6, pp. 14-15.

إِنَّ الدُّنْيَا حُلْوَةٌ خَضِرَةٌ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ مُسْتَخْلِفُكُمْ فِيهَا فَيَنْظُرُ كَيْفَ تَعْمَلُونَ فَاتَّقُوا الدُّنْيَا
وَاتَّقُوا النِّسَاءَ

"Verily, the world is sweet and green [appealing]. And verily Allah has placed you as successors in it. And He sees how you act, so beware of the world and beware of women." (Recorded by Muslim.)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also described how the believers and how the disbelievers feel about this world. In a hadith, he stated,

الدُّنْيَا سِجْنُ الْمُؤْمِنِ وَجَنَّةُ الْكَافِرِ

"This world is a prison for the believer and a paradise for the disbeliever." (Recorded by Muslim.)

This world can be very alluring, as all of the above make clear. For that reason, Allah even warned the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) about being with those people who are seeking only this world. The Prophet (peace be upon him)— and therefore all believers— was told to seek the company of those people who are working for the Hereafter. He should be with them and face with patience the trials, sacrifices and difficulties of this world. The truth is from Allah and that truth states that the real life is the life of the Hereafter; those who only work for this life and follow their lusts and desires herein will be in great loss. Allah says,

وَٱصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ ٱلَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُم بِٱلْغَدَوٰةِ وَٱلْعَشِىِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُۥ ۖ
وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ ٱلْحَيَوٰةِ ٱلدُّنْيَا ۖ وَلَا تُطِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا
قَلْبَهُۥ عَن ذِكْرِنَا وَٱتَّبَعَ هَوَىٰهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُۥ فُرُطًا ﴿٢٨﴾ وَقُلِ ٱلْحَقُّ مِن
رَّبِّكُمْ ۖ فَمَن شَآءَ فَلْيُؤْمِن وَمَن شَآءَ فَلْيَكْفُرْ ۚ

"And keep yourself (O Muhammad) patiently with those who call on their Lord morning and afternoon, seeking His countenance, and let not your eyes overlook them, desiring the pomp and glitter of the life of the world; and obey not him whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance, one who follows his own lusts and whose affair has been lost. And say: The truth is from your Lord. Then whosoever wills, let him believe. And whosoever wills, let him disbelieve" (*al-Kahf* 28-29).

After all of the above has been said, the following points made by Ahmad Fareed must also be made:

The censuring of this world is not with respect to the place of the world, which is the Earth, or what is placed in it of mountains, rivers and mines. All of that is part of the bounties of Allah upon His servants as they contain many beneficial things for them. They are aspects for reflection and indicators of the oneness of the Creator and of His power and greatness. The censuring and the blame is with respect to the acts that humans do in the world as most of those acts are not done in the proper fashion that leads to praiseworthy results...

With respect to the world, humans are divided into two categories. First are those who reject the idea that for the humans there is an abode after this world for reward and punishment... The only concern for those people is enjoying this world and taking advantage of its pleasure before they die, as Allah has said, "Those who disbelieve enjoy themselves and eat as grazing livestock eat, and the Fire will be a residence for them" (*Muhammad* 12).

The second category of people are those who recognize that there is an abode after death for reward and punishment. These are those who follow the messengers. These people are also subdivided into three subcategories: the one who wrongs himself, the moderate one and the one who races forward to good deeds by the permission of Allah.

As for those who wrong themselves: these are the majority. Most of them look at the glitter and beauty of this world and take it in an improper fashion and use it in an improper way. This world becomes their greatest concern. It is by this world that they become pleased; it is due to it that they become angry; it is according to it that they make alliances with others or oppose others. These are the people of play, diversion and attraction. Although they do believe in the Hereafter on a general level, they do not recognize what is the purpose of this world. They do not recognize that it is a place for them to get provisions for what is after it.

As for the moderate ones: Those are the ones who take from this world in a permissible fashion; they fulfill its obligations; they take for themselves the obligatory provisions and go beyond that to enjoy part of what this world has to offer. There is no punishment for them for what they have done. However, they have lessened their rewards [in the Hereafter]...

As for those who race forward to good deeds by the permission of Allah: They understand what is the purpose of this world

> and they work according to what that requires. They know full well that Allah has placed His servants in this abode in order to test them to see which of them are the best in deeds...
>
> Saeed ibn Jubair said, "The deceiving pleasures and possessions are those that divert you from seeking the Hereafter. What does not divert you [from that goal] are not deceiving pleasures and possessions but pleasures and possessions that make you reach what is better than it." Yahya ibn Muaadh said, "How can I not love this world? Decreed for me in it is the food by which I acquire life, by which I achieve acts of obedience and by which I attain Paradise."[1]

"Like a Stranger"

This hadith shows that a believer should have one of two attitudes toward this world. The first is that of a stranger in a strange land. He feels that he is in a place where he does not belong. This is not his home and he cannot feel entirely happy here. His heart can never be tied to this land. Instead, his heart and mind are preoccupied with getting back to his home. His time and his efforts are filled with that purpose. He is spending his time, money and capabilities to gather together what he needs to return to his home. His time is not spent or wasted on entrenching himself deeply in this environment to which he knows that he does not belong.

Therefore, the believer's life, long-term aspirations, goal in life, time, efforts, work and wealth should never be spent for the purposes of this worldly life alone. Instead, they should all be guided by his urgent desire to reach his true home, where he knows he belongs. They must all be guided by his want to please Allah and to be entered among Allah's pious servants in the everlasting home of Paradise.

This is how a stranger behaves when he is in a foreign land. He is not happy with his day unless he feels that during it he has done something that will eventually lead him back to his home or that has helped him reach his final goal.

Furthermore, he does not try to compete with the inhabitants of that strange land because his interests and their interests are completely at odds. In addition, he is not trying to win their respect or praise, as in his heart he is merely seeking to return to his land. Al-Hasan al-Basri once said, "The believer is in the world like a stranger. He does not become unhappy from its humiliation, nor does he compete for its honor. He has one purpose and the people have another purpose."[2] Thus, the believer will not compete against others for this world. Many times, this will be considered something very strange to others. However, he will not care if they consider him different or strange. In fact, he will definitely be a stranger to them because his concerns are so very different from theirs.

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[1] Ahmad Fareed, *Tazkiyah al-Nufoos* (Alexandria, Egypt: Daar al-Aqeedah li-l-Turaath, 1993), pp. 59-61.

[2] Quoted in ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 379.

Ibn Rajab points out that Allah originally placed Adam and Eve in Paradise. Then they were expelled from it. But they and their pious descendants were promised to be returned to that original home. Hence, that is the believer's real home. In this world, he is a stranger, away from his home. Therefore, the believer is always yearning to return to that original home from whence he came.[1]

There are some other points that need to be explicitly stated concerning the stranger. A stranger desires to return to his land. However, he knows that he cannot return to his homeland if he starves to death where he is or if he makes extra efforts to survive where he is while sacrificing efforts to provide for his journey. It is true that the believer's heart is not attached to this world, but at the same time, he must realize that he has to work in this world to be able to make it back to his homeland. That is, for the believer, this is the place of working— working with the goal of getting to where he belongs. This work involves true faith and performing the good deeds that are obligatory or recommended for him. These are, in fact, the provisions that will help him reach his homeland he so longs for.

However, some of that "work" involves this worldly life. Although he is a stranger, he is forced to have some involvement in this world. He is obliged to support himself and his family. He is obliged to order good and eradicate evil. He is obliged to be kind and good to others and so forth. Hence, he is a stranger but not in a negative sense; he contributes what is good to this world, yet he is not working for the sake of this world.

"or"

The word "or" here is not meant as a kind of indecision or doubt.[2] Instead, it implies a choice or variation, as in the phrase, "be this or that." However, according to al-Teebi, it is even better to be understood it as *bal* (بل). According to this interpretation, the translation would be, "Be in this world like a stranger; in fact, you should actually be like one traveling along a path." Hence, the Prophet (peace be upon him) first mentioned the stranger and then mentioned a higher or better level, the traveler. This is because a stranger can live and settle in the land where he is a stranger. However, the traveler has no intention but to move on. He does no deed except that which helps him reach his destination, living in fear that something may happen to him that will keep him from being able to reach his destination. Therefore, he is not actually residing in or becoming part of a place, as a stranger may do to some extent, but he is simply trying to move on.[1]

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[1] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 379. It should be noted that there is a difference of opinion among the scholars as to whether the Paradise that Adam and Eve were in is the same Paradise that is promised to the believers in the Hereafter.

[2] Ibn Uthaimeen mentions the possibility that the doubt is from one of the narrators, but that does not seem to be the likely case. Cf., ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 6, p. 27.

It is important to note that these are the only two options that the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave the believer with respect to this world: either be like a stranger or like one traveling along a path. If a believer's attitude toward this world does not resemble one of those two categories, it means that he is not treating this world in the manner that the Prophet (peace be upon him) has instructed.

"a traveler along a path"

The second possibility that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) mentioned for the believer is to be like a traveler along a path. This implies that the person is actually not residing anywhere but is always moving toward his final destination or goal. The end of his travels, of course, will be his death. Therefore, his only preoccupation is to gather the provisions that he needs to continue his journey and make his journey a successful one.

In another hadith, it is narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was lying on a hard mat. Ibn Masood began to wipe the effects of the mat from the Prophet's body and suggested that he have something better to sleep on. The Prophet's reply was,

مَا لِي وَلِلدُّنْيَا مَا أَنَا وَالدُّنْيَا إِنَّمَا مَثَلِي وَمَثَلُ الدُّنْيَا كَرَاكِبٍ ظَلَّ تَحْتَ شَجَرَةٍ ثُمَّ رَاحَ
وَتَرَكَهَا

"What do I have to do with this worldly life? I and this worldly life are but like a traveler who stopped for a little while under a tree to get some shade and then he moved on."[2]

Al-Nawawi stated that a person in this world is like a slave who was sent by his master to another land to fulfill some objective. His goal will be to fulfill that objective as quickly as possible and then return to his land and owner. As long as he is there, he will not bother with anything else along the way or with gathering as much as he can from that other land.[3]

Ibn Hajr stated, "In the same way that a traveler is not in need of more than what will get him to his destination, a believer does not need any more of this world than what will help him reach his [desired] destination [of Paradise]."[1]

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[1] Al-Teebi was quoted in ibn Hajr, *Fath* (al-Tijaariyyah), vol. 13, p. 9.

[2] Recorded by Ahmad, al-Tirmidhi, ibn Maajah and others. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 989. A similar story has been narrated concerning Umar and the Prophet (peace be upon him). That narration was recorded by Ahmad, al-Haakim and ibn Hibbaan.

[3] Al-Nawawi was quoted in ibn Hajr, *Fath* (al-Tijaariyyah), vol. 13, p. 10.

Hence, the believer is not interested in gathering too much of this world because such things make it more difficult for him to continue on his travels and to travel easily. Because this world is so alluring and attractive, it is easy for a Muslim to forget this. When he becomes attracted and attached to the things of this world, he forgets that he is on a journey. Instead of being ready to move closer to his destination when necessary, his store of worldly possessions and strong attachment to them render him unable to move on to the next leg of his trip. He is now no longer gathering provisions for his journey and his final destination but he is now accumulating things to help him stay where he is and become a full-fledged resident of this world. In other words, he has lost sight of the fact that he is supposed to be working and traveling toward a destination. He has become preoccupied with this worldly life, which should have remained only an insignificant stop along his journey and not something that takes up most of his time and efforts.

There is another important aspect that any traveler must be aware of: not getting lost or sidetracked along the way. The travels of a believer may be very long before he meets his Lord. Along the way, there are many things that may distract him. There are even enemies along the path. Satan, for example, is ever ready to take the believer away from the path. Therefore, the believer who is on this journey must always be seeking Allah's guidance and His help to keep him moving in the right direction. Any straying from that path could be disastrous; his end may come suddenly and he may never have the chance to return to the straight path. Allah has awakened the believers to that sobering reality and He has guided them to say in every *rakah* of every prayer, "Guide us to the Straight Path." Similarly, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), by his example of constantly making the following supplication, taught the believers to say,

يَا مُقَلِّبَ الْقُلُوبِ ثَبِّتْ قَلْبِي عَلَى دِينِكَ

"O the One who Turns the Hearts, confirm my heart upon your religion."[2]

Many Muslims are not awake to the fact that they are actually on a journey, heading toward the meeting with their Lord. What is the solution for such Muslims? Al-Fudhail ibn Iyaadh said to a man, "How old are you?" He said, "Sixty years old." Al-Fudhail then said, "For sixty years you have been traveling toward your Lord. It seems that you will soon reach your destination." The man said, "We belong to Allah and to Him we will return." Al-Fudhail said, "Do you know what that means? You are saying: I am a slave of Allah and to Him is the return. The one who knows that he is a slave of Allah and that he shall return to Him knows that he is, in fact, to be detained. The one who knows that he is to be detained knows that he is going to be asked. Therefore, he must prepare answers for that questioning." The man said, "What is the solution?" Al-Fudhail said, "It is simple." The man said, "What is it?" He replied, "Do good for the remainder of your life and you will be forgiven for what you did in the past. However, if you do evil in what remains of your life, you will be held responsible for what you did in the past and in the future."[1]

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[1] Ibn Hajr, *Fath* (al-Tijaariyyah), vol. 13, pp. 9-10.

[2] Recorded by al-Tirmidhi and others. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 1323.

So, everyone is on a journey. It is a journey that ends with one's meeting his Lord. When he meets Allah, he will be asked about his journey and how he behaved during it. If he realizes now that he is on such a journey, he should start preparing for the meeting toward which he is heading. And the only preparation is by increasing one's faith, doing good deeds and working for that final destination rather than for any vain intermediate aim.

"Count yourself among the inhabitants of the grave."

The believer must always be conscious of the fact that he is living in the shade of death. At any moment, death may overtake him. When this realization is clear in the person's mind, he will constantly be preparing for his death. And there is only one way to actually prepare for death: by performing good deeds and abstaining from evil deeds.

For such a person, the pleasures of this world will not be foremost on his mind. In another hadith, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) stated,

أَكْثِرُوا ذِكْرَ هَاذِمِ اللَّذَاتِ المَوْتُ فَإِنَّهُ لَمْ يَذْكُرهُ أحدٌ فِي ضيقٍ مِنَ العيشِ إلا وسَّعهُ عليهِ
ولا ذكرهُ في سعةٍ إلا ضيَّقها عليه

"Remember the destroyer of pleasures— death— often. Verily, no one remembers it during straitened times in his life except that it makes the matter easier upon him. And no one remembers it during times of ease except that it makes the matter tighter upon him."[2] In other words, when one feels disappointed by the lack of comforts in this world and then remembers death, he will realize that there is no real comfort or joy in this world for one to be depressed about. Hence, his affair will be made easier by remembering death. And, during times of ease and material comfort, when one remembers death, the matter that brings an end to all of these fleeting comforts, one keeps oneself from getting overly attached to and fond of these worldly items. The person will realize that such things are not necessities but it is faith and good deeds that are needed.

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[1] Quoted in ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 383.

[2] Recorded by al-Baihaqi in *Shuab al-Imaan*, ibn Hibbaan and al-Bazzaar. According to al-Albaani, it is *hasan*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 1, p. 264.

These are just some of the benefits of considering oneself among the inhabitants of the graves and of remembering death.

ibn Umar would say, "If you survive till the late afternoon..."

The statement of ibn Umar is directly related to the hadith. One of the ills that afflicts humans and makes them heedless of the Hereafter is thinking— if not consciously, then through actions— that this world and life is their real world and life. They begin to act like they are going to live here forever. Rather, they begin to act as though this were their permanent abode and there were no abode other than this one. Their deeds become the deeds of this world rather than for the Hereafter.

One of the best ways to overcome this disease is described here in the words of ibn Umar, "If you survive till the late afternoon, do not expect [to be alive in] the morning. If you survive till the morning, do not expect [to be alive in] the late afternoon." One should realize that death— the end of this journey— is definitely approaching, perhaps very soon. Instead of working for elaborate and long-run hopes in this world, one should remember that at any moment this journey may come to an end. It will be of no avail to him to dream of future goals and hopes and to be always working for those goals if, when doing so, he is not also doing those deeds that will avail him in the Hereafter. It makes no sense to always work for hopes and dreams of this world which may never come to pass and to not work for the Hereafter which will definitely come to pass.

In another hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) displayed in a graphic fashion the reality of this life and the dreams that people have. Anas narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) drew for them some lines and, pointing to them, said, "This is man, these are the dreams and this is the appointed time. When he is like that [that is, heading toward his dreams], the closer line comes." (Recorded by al-Bukhari.) There is some difference of opinion as to the exact way in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) drew those lines. Figure 40.1 displays two of the common understandings of this hadith.[1]

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[1] Cf., ibn Hajr, *Fath* (Daar al-Baaz), vol. 11, p. 285.

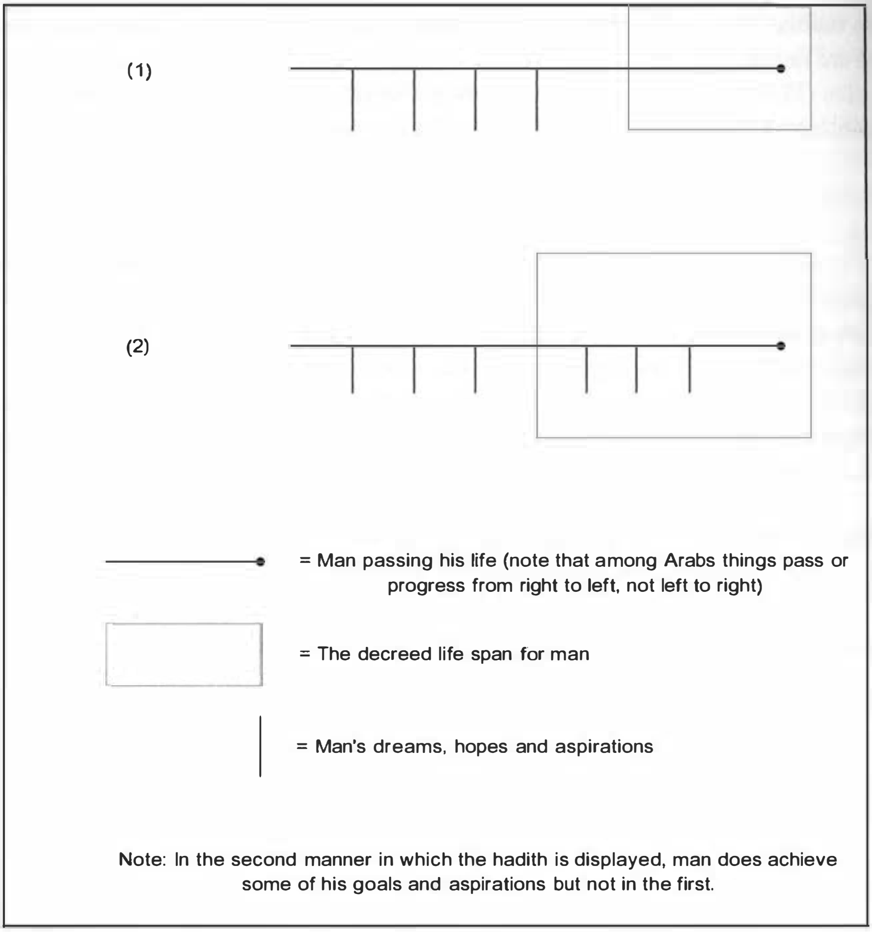
(1)
(2)
= Man passing his life (note that among Arabs things pass or progress from right to left, not left to right)
= The decreed life span for man
= Man's dreams, hopes and aspirations
Note: In the second manner in which the hadith is displayed, man does achieve some of his goals and aspirations but not in the first.

Figure 40.1 How the Prophet (peace be upon him) displayed the dreams and hopes of man

In that simple display, the Prophet (peace be upon him) plainly displayed the stark reality of the dreams and aspirations of this worldly life. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has shown that if one pins his hopes on those dreams, he will indeed be greatly disappointed.

When one lives in such a state of remembrance of death, he will not leave the good deeds that he can or should do in the morning until the evening nor will he leave the deeds he can do in the evening until the morning. Instead, he will do them as soon as he can for he realizes that if he does not do them soon, he may never get a chance to do them. He will take advantage of every moment. If he does not do so, there may come a time when he will be in despair for having failed to perform those good deeds although he had the opportunity to do them. Unfortunately, he did not take advantage of that opportunity because he felt that he would live long enough to meet his goals of this world as well as do those good deeds later.

This concept of curtailing long-term hopes in this world— and instead working for the certainty of the Hereafter— was well understood by the early pious generations of Muslims. Ibn Rajab quotes many narrations related to it. The following are some examples from his commentary to this hadith:[1]

Al-Marwoozi asked Ahmad ibn Hanbal, "What is *zuhd* (detachment) in this world?" He replied, "Curtailing one's hopes and dreams, when someone in the morning says, 'I shall not expect to live until the evening.'"

Bakr al-Muzani said, "If you want your prayer to benefit you, say to yourself, 'Perhaps I will never perform another prayer [after it].'" This, in fact, is based on a hadith in which a man came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said, "Teach me and make it very concise." Part of what the Prophet (peace be upon him) told him was,

إِذَا قُمْتَ فِي صَلاتِكَ فَصَلِّ صَلاةَ مُوَدِّعٍ

"When you stand for your prayer, perform a farewell prayer [as if there is to be no prayer after it]."[2]

Maroof al-Karkhi once asked another man to lead the prayer. The man said, "If I lead you in this prayer, I will not lead you in any other prayer afterwards." Al-Karkhi said, "Do you consider that you will pray another prayer [in the future]? I seek refuge from [such] distant hopes for it keeps one from doing the best deeds."

Ibn Daqeeq al-Eid points out that it is natural for man to have such hopes and dreams. Therefore, he must actually struggle against this tendency in himself. He must overcome his desires, hopes and weaknesses. He must do this if he truly wishes to be successful.[3]

"Take from your health for your sickness..."

Here, ibn Umar is giving advice that one should perform good deeds while in a state of health before sickness and weakness overcomes him and he does not have the strength to do the good deeds. Similarly, one must perform good deeds during one's lifetime before death overtakes him and he does not have the ability or opportunity to work. As noted earlier, in another narration, ibn Umar also said, "For certainly, you do not know, O servant of Allah, what your name will be tomorrow." In other words, "You do not know whether you will be among the living or the dead tomorrow, so you must act now."

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[1] Cf., ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, pp. 384-387.

[2] Recorded by Ahmad and ibn Maajah. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 1, p. 190.

[3] Ibn Daqeeq al-Eid, *Sharh*, p. 106.

This advice from ibn Umar can also be derived from different hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Al-Bukhari recorded that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

نِعْمَتَانِ مَغْبُونٌ فِيهِمَا كَثِيرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ الصِّحَّةُ وَالْفَرَاغُ

“There are two bounties that many people lose [by not taking full advantage of them]: health and free time.”[1]

In another hadith, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) stated,

اغْتَنِمْ خَمْسًا قَبْلَ خَمْسٍ شَبَابَكَ قَبْلَ هَرَمِكَ وَصِحَّتَكَ قَبْلَ سَقَمِكَ وَغِنَاكَ
قَبْلَ فَقْرِكَ وَفَرَاغَكَ قَبْلَ شُغُلِكَ وَحَيَاتَكَ قَبْلَ مَوْتِكَ

“Take advantage of five before [another] five occur: Your youth before your old age, your health before your illness, your wealth before your poverty, your free time before your preoccupation, your life before your death.”[2]

The point of these hadith and ibn Umar’s statement is very clear: Allah has given humanity ample means and opportunity to perform good deeds. These means include health, youthful energy, wealth, free time and, in fact, life in itself. However, with respect to the first four, Allah usually does not give them to an individual throughout his entire life span. This is the fact of which the Prophet (peace be upon him) is reminding the Muslims: Since these means may not be with a person throughout his entire life, he must take advantage of them and use them for his benefit in the Hereafter while he has them.

Each of those five resources can be a great trial for humans. Indeed, the trial of bounties can be much greater than the trial of hardships. Under hardship, one may have no recourse except to remain patient. However, when one is granted bounties, numerous doors open up to him: the doors to permissible things and the doors to forbidden things. Under these circumstances, the person must work hard to restrict himself to entering only those doors that lead to what is permissible and good.

Because many people tend to overlook these great trials, each one of these five bounties shall be discussed separately.

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[1] The wording of the hadith describes a person who has sold something or given something up for less than what it is worth. Free time and health are like one’s capital. If one uses them properly by using them in obedience to Allah, one can make a great deal of profit. If one does not use them properly, by forgetting about Allah or disobeying Allah, he will then face losses. Cf., ibn Hajr, *Fath* (al-Tijaariyyah), vol. 13, p. 5.

[2] Recorded by al-Haakim, al-Baihaqi in *Shuab al-Imaan* and Ahmad in *al-Zuhd*. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 1, pp. 243-244.

Wealth. Wealth is one of the greatest trials facing man. As Allah says in the Quran,

وَٱعۡلَمُوٓاْ أَنَّمَآ أَمۡوَٰلُكُمۡ وَأَوۡلَٰدُكُمۡ فِتۡنَةٞ وَأَنَّ ٱللَّهَ عِندَهُۥٓ أَجۡرٌ عَظِيمٞ

"Know that your wealth and your children are not but a trial for you and that Allah has with Him a great reward" (*al-Anfaal* 28; *al-Taghaabun* 15 has a similar message). The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said,

إِنَّ لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ فِتْنَةً وَفِتْنَةُ أُمَّتِي الْمَالُ

"Verily, for every nation there is a *fitnah* (trial and temptation). And the *fitnah* of my nation is wealth."[1]

Allah indicates how wealth may divert one's attention from the matter of most importance: the remembrance and worship of Allah. Allah says,

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ لَا تُلۡهِكُمۡ أَمۡوَٰلُكُمۡ وَلَآ أَوۡلَٰدُكُمۡ عَن ذِكۡرِ ٱللَّهِۚ وَمَن يَفۡعَلۡ ذَٰلِكَ فَأُوْلَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلۡخَٰسِرُونَ

"O you who believe, let not your wealth and children divert you from the remembrance of Allah. And whoever does that, then they are the losers" (*al-Munaafiqoon* 9).

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said,

إِنَّ الأَكْثَرِينَ هُمُ الأَقَلُّونَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِلاَّ مَنْ قَالَ هَكَذَا وَهَكَذَا وَهَكَذَا

"Verily, those who have the most [wealth] will be the ones with least on the Day of Resurrection except for the one who says, 'This is for that, this is for that and this is for that [in other words, he gives the wealth away for good causes].'" (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.) In general, gathering a lot of wealth in this world takes up a lot of time and effort. Those who gather such wealth are spending much of their time in such worldly matters and, hence, they do not have much time to spend for matters of the next world. Unless they use that wealth in good ways before Allah takes it from them, they will be among the people with the least on the Day of Judgment.

Using wealth in a good way is one of the greatest ways by which one can earn Allah's pleasure. The relevant issue is what the person does when he has wealth. Does he use it in ways that are beneficial to him for his meeting with his Lord? Or does he use it in ways that do not benefit him or may even harm him? If he does not use that wealth in a way that is beneficial to himself in the Hereafter, he has lost a tremendous opportunity. He may never get that opportunity again. When he uses up all of his wealth in frivolous pursuits, there may come a time when he needs all he has simply to support himself and his family. At that time, the question of him giving for the sake of Allah will no longer be a viable question. He will not have the ability to give and, worst of all, he demonstrated to Allah that if he had the ability to give, he would not give.

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[1] Recorded by al-Tirmidhi and al-Haakim. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 1, p. 430.

The Quran describes people who do not realize their mistake of not giving for the sake of Allah and using their wealth in the proper way until it is too late:

وَأَنفِقُوا۟ مِن مَّا رَزَقْنَـٰكُم مِّن قَبْلِ أَن يَأْتِىَ أَحَدَكُمُ ٱلْمَوْتُ فَيَقُولَ رَبِّ لَوْلَآ
أَخَّرْتَنِىٓ إِلَىٰٓ أَجَلٍ قَرِيبٍ فَأَصَّدَّقَ وَأَكُن مِّنَ ٱلصَّـٰلِحِينَ ﴿١٠﴾ وَلَن يُؤَخِّرَ ٱللَّهُ
نَفْسًا إِذَا جَآءَ أَجَلُهَا ۚ وَٱللَّهُ خَبِيرٌۢ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

"And spend [in the way of Allah] from what We have provided you before death approaches one of you and he says, 'My Lord, if only You would delay me for a brief term so I would give charity and be among the righteous.' But never will Allah delay a soul when its time has come. And Allah is acquainted with what you do" (*al-Munaafiqoon* 10-11).

Free time. Free time is also among the important bounties that Allah gives to mankind. It is during a person's free time that he can truly dedicate himself to studying, memorizing the Quran, helping the poor and all sorts of good deeds. The proper use of one's free time is a very important means of gaining Allah's pleasure in the Hereafter. Ibn Hajr points out that the one who has free time actually has no excuse for not performing good deeds and improving himself. Such free time will be a proof against him unless he uses it properly.[1]

Unfortunately, much of modern civilization is dedicated to entertainment, enjoyment, pleasure and sensual gratification, as can be seen by the dominance and place of movies, sports, music, art, alcohol and so forth. A Muslim must be careful not to allow this civilization, with all of its supposed fun and glitter, to affect him negatively and allow him to waste his precious time. It is very easy, for example, for one hour of benefit-less television watching to turn into two hours, then three hours and so forth. It is very easy to be taken by the things of this world and to spend all of one's time enjoying and seeking the goods of this world. One should keep in mind the words of the Prophet (peace be upon him),

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[1] Ibn Hajr, *Fath*, vol. 13, p. 5.

شِرَارُ أُمَّتِي الَّذِينَ وُلِدُوا فِي النَّعِيمِ وَغُذُّوا بِهِ هِمَّتُهُمْ أَلْوَانُ الطَّعَامِ
وَأَلْوَانُ الثِّيَابِ يَتَشَدَّقُونَ فِي الْكَلَامِ

"The worst of my Nation are those who are born into bounties and nurtured in them. Their most important concern is the types of food and the types of clothing, while they are boastful in speech."[1]

Again, a Muslim should spend his free time— before he becomes preoccupied with many things later in his life— in ways that are beneficial.

Health. Ill-health is one of the greatest barriers to performing good deeds. Most good deeds require some exertion. If one is sick, temporarily or permanently, he will not find the means to perform many of those good deeds. By Allah's mercy, if a person was doing good deeds and then becomes ill, preventing him from continuing those good deeds, Allah will continue to reward him for those deeds that he would have done had his illness not kept him from performing them. (Such is explicitly mentioned in a hadith in *Sahih al-Bukhari*.) But if a person was not performing good deeds before his illness, he will not be rewarded for any deeds that he is not now able to perform due to his illness.[2] Hence, his illness will form no excuse for him as he had demonstrated, when he was healthy, that he was not from those people who performed the good deeds.

Youth[3]. Youth is one of the most important times in a person's life. It is a time of strength, energy and zeal. Not only that, it is a time that usually combines many of the other blessings mentioned by the Prophet (peace be upon him). It is usually during one's youth that one has the most free time and fewest responsibilities. It is usually during one's youth that one is at the peak of good health.[4]

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[1] Recorded by ibn al-Mubaarak in *al-Zuhd*. According to Ahmad Fareed, it is *sahih* due to supporting evidences. He notes that al-Albaani pronounced it weak in one work and then later showed it to be acceptable. See Ahmad Fareed, footnotes to Abdullah ibn al-Mubaarak, *al-Zuhd wa al-Raqaaiq* (Riyadh: Daar al-Miraaj al-Dauliyyah, 1995), vol. 2, p. 591.

[2] Cf., ibn Hajr, *Fath* (al-Tijaariyyah), vol. 13, p. 10.

[3] The actual word that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used, and translated here as "youth", is related to *shabaab*. There is a difference of opinion as to its exact determination. In general, it means, "youth, youthfulness, prime of manhood or young manhood." However, specifically some have said that it refers to the ages from puberty to thirty years; some say from puberty to thirty-two years; some say it reaches to the age of forty; some have even said that it reaches to the age of fifty-two. (Cf., Lane, vol. 2, pp. 1493-1494.) In any case, the younger portion of that span, which is agreed upon as falling under its definition, is what is being emphasized in the text above.

[4] The only aspect that is often times missing for the youth is wealth.

It is not unusual in this modern age for people to consider youth a time for fun and enjoyment, up to the age of eighteen, twenty-one, or until they finish college and so forth. Even among Muslims, there is often not much emphasis on inculcating maturity and understanding in the youth. However, this is not the proper Islamic approach. As mentioned earlier, it was the young Companions whom the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave some of his most profound statements. According to Islamic law, by the time a person reaches the age of puberty— around thirteen years of age for many people— he is fully responsible for his deeds. Hence, the training, teaching and preparation for that heavy responsibility must take place even before he reaches that age.

A cursory look at the example of the youth brought up under the influence of the Prophet (peace be upon him) demonstrates how they put their youth to good use and took advantage of that blessing before Allah took it away from them. Note the following:

Some of the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him), such as ibn Umar, wanted to participate in the battle of Badr and risk their lives for the sake of Allah, but the Prophet (peace be upon him) had to reject them as they had not yet reached the age of puberty.

At the Battle of Badr, it was two young Muslims who killed Abu Jahl. The two were so young that Abdul Rahman ibn Auf described them as "still seemingly inexperienced in the art of fighting."[1]

Usaama ibn Zaid was appointed to lead one of the largest Muslim armies, which included both Abu Bakr and Umar, yet he was only eighteen years of age. Indeed, some people questioned the choice of Usaama on account of his young age. Obviously, the Prophet (peace be upon him) would not have appointed him to that position unless he had developed the maturity, faith and understanding that it takes for such a position.[2]

Much of the knowledge of the sunnah was passed on by those younger Companions who lived and grew up around the Prophet (peace be upon him). Such Companions included ibn Masood, ibn Abbaas, ibn Umar and Aisha (may Allah be pleased with all of them).[3]

Life. Every Muslim must realize what a trial life is in itself and why Allah has given life to him. Allah has described the purpose of life and death in the following verse,

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[1] Cf., Safi-ur-Rahman al-Mubarakpuri, *Ar-Raheeq al-Makhtum (The Sealed Nectar)* (Riyadh: Maktaba Daar-us-Salam, 1995), p. 223.

[2] Cf., al-Mubarakpuri, p. 470.

[3] In the Quran also, Abraham (*al-Anbiyaa* 60) and the inhabitants of the Cave (*al-Kahf* 10 and 13) have been referred to as *fatta*, which also implies people of a youthful age.

﴿ تَبَٰرَكَ ٱلَّذِى بِيَدِهِ ٱلْمُلْكُ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ۝١ ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَ
ٱلْمَوْتَ وَٱلْحَيَوٰةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ۚ وَهُوَ ٱلْعَزِيزُ ٱلْغَفُورُ

“Blessed is He in whose hand is dominion, and He is powerful over all things. [He] who created death and life to test you as to which of you is best in deed. And He is the Exalted in Might, the Forgiving” (*al-Mulk* 1-2). In his commentary to these verses, Maudoodi highlights some essential and relevant points:

> That is, the object of giving life to men in the world and causing their death is to test them to see which of them is best in deeds. Allusion has been made in this brief sentence to a number of truths: (1) That life and death are given by Allah; no one else can grant life nor cause death; (2) that neither the life nor the death of a creation like man, which has been give the power to do both good and evil, is purposeless; the Creator has created him in the world for the test: life is for him the period of the test and death means that the time allotted for the test has come to an end; (3) that for the sake of this very test the Creator has given every man an opportunity for action, so that he may do good or evil in the world and practically show what kind of a man he is; (4) that the Creator alone will decide who has done good or evil; it is not for us to purpose a criterion for the good and evil deeds but [such is] for Almighty Allah; therefore, whoever desires to get through the test, will have to find out what is the criterion of a good deed in His sight; the fifth point is contained in the meaning of the test itself, that is, every person will be recompensed according to his deeds, for if there was no reward or punishment the test would be meaningless.[1]

Every Muslim must realize that this life is coming to an end and understand the points Maudoodi makes in the above quote. When a person dies, his chasing after the desires of this life come to an end. Also, when life comes to an end, his opportunity for working also comes to an end. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

يَتْبَعُ الْمَيِّتَ ثَلاثَةٌ فَيَرْجِعُ اثْنَانِ وَيَبْقَى مَعَهُ وَاحِدٌ يَتْبَعُهُ أَهْلُهُ وَمَالُهُ وَعَمَلُهُ فَيَرْجِعُ أَهْلُهُ
وَمَالُهُ وَيَبْقَى عَمَلُهُ

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[1] Maudoodi, *The Meaning*, vol. XV, p. 9.

"Three things follow the deceased [to his grave], two of them return and one remains with him: His family, wealth and deeds follow him while his family and wealth return and only his deeds remain with him." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

However, in the grave, he is in need of provisions, otherwise the grave will be a torturous place for him. Unfortunately for the deceased, the provisions for the grave and the Hereafter must be obtained while one is in this life, before death comes to him. Allah has reminded humans of this reality by telling them,

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ ٱتَّقُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَلۡتَنظُرۡ نَفۡسٞ مَّا قَدَّمَتۡ لِغَدٖۖ وَٱتَّقُواْ ٱللَّهَۚ
إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ خَبِيرُۢ بِمَا تَعۡمَلُونَ

"O you who believe, fear Allah. And let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow. And [again] fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is acquainted with what you do" (*al-Hashr* 18).

If the person did not send ahead those provisions while he was alive, he will yearn to return to this life in order to get those badly needed provisions. But there will be no return. He will be lost and sorrowful over his failure to get and store his provisions for that journey when he had the ability to do so.[1] He will be in despair, finding no possible escape from what he now must face.

In different verses of the Quran, Allah has made this point very clear:

حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا جَآءَ أَحَدَهُمُ ٱلۡمَوۡتُ قَالَ رَبِّ ٱرۡجِعُونِ ﴿٩٩﴾ لَعَلِّيٓ أَعۡمَلُ صَٰلِحٗا
فِيمَا تَرَكۡتُۚ كَلَّآۚ إِنَّهَا كَلِمَةٌ هُوَ قَآئِلُهَاۖ وَمِن وَرَآئِهِم بَرۡزَخٌ إِلَىٰ يَوۡمِ
يُبۡعَثُونَ

"[Such is the state of the disbelievers] until, when death comes to one of them, he says, 'My Lord, send me back that I might do righteousness in that which I left behind.' No! It is only a word he is saying [without any truth to it]; and behind them is a barrier until the Day they are resurrected" (*al-Muminoon* 99-100).

وَٱتَّبِعُوٓاْ أَحۡسَنَ مَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيۡكُم مِّن رَّبِّكُم مِّن قَبۡلِ أَن يَأۡتِيَكُمُ ٱلۡعَذَابُ
بَغۡتَةٗ وَأَنتُمۡ لَا تَشۡعُرُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾ أَن تَقُولَ نَفۡسٞ يَٰحَسۡرَتَىٰ عَلَىٰ مَا فَرَّطتُ

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[1] Cf., al-Ghazzaali's statement in al-Nawawi, *Sharh al-Arbaeen* (Ridha), p. 91.

فِي جَنۢبِ ٱللَّهِ وَإِن كُنتُ لَمِنَ ٱلسَّٰخِرِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾ أَوْ تَقُولَ لَوْ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ هَدَىٰنِي
لَكُنتُ مِنَ ٱلْمُتَّقِينَ

“And follow the best of what was revealed to you from your Lord before the punishment comes upon you suddenly while you do not perceive it. Lest a soul should say, ‘Oh [how great is] my regret over what I neglected with regard to Allah and that I was among the mockers.’ Or [lest] it should say, ‘If only Allah had guided me, I would have been among the righteous.’ Or [lest] it say when it sees the punishment, ‘If only I had another turn [at worldly life] so I could be among the doers of good’” (*al-Zumar* 55-58).

“For certainly, you do not know, O servant of Allah, what your name will be tomorrow.”

Obviously, this is not in reference to one’s personal name. Instead, ibn Hajr explains, it means either that it is not known if the person will be happy or miserable in the Hereafter, or that it is not known whether he will be named among the dead or the living in the near future.[1]

Again, the message of this passage is much the same as the earlier passages. Since one does not know when he is going to die, and even if he will live until today’s evening, it must mean that he must work at the present time. There is no room for procrastination; indeed, procrastination is a tool of Satan. By it, he keeps the person from repenting and doing good deeds. However, the believer can defeat this ploy of Satan by reminding himself that he never does not know when he will die or among whom he will be counted on the following day.

Other Points Related to This Hadith

- In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has instructed Muslims to give this world and this life its proper due, all toward the overall goal of achieving the good of the Hereafter.[2] In other words, even the stranger and the traveler have to meet their needs in this world. They make sure that they meet these needs in such a way that it does not harm their overall goal. Hence, this hadith is not implying that one must abandon everything of this world. Instead, it is implying that one’s heart should not be attached to this world (as in the case of a stranger), and that one is only taking from this world what he needs to carry on his journey to his destination (as in the case of a traveler). As Saeed ibn Jubair said, “This worldly life is a deceiving form of enjoyment if it diverts the person from seeking the Hereafter. However, if it calls a person to seeking Allah's pleasure and seeking the Hereafter, then it is an excellent means."[1]

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[1] Ibn Hajr, *Fath* (al-Tijaariyyah), vol. 13, p. 10.
[2] Al-Baitaar, pp. 248-249.

- The attitude of the believer should be the following: When he does work that he knows will help him achieve his goal of reaching Paradise, he should be happy and pleased. When he does work that harms that goal, he should be unhappy and dismayed. This is his case regardless of how much he is given of this world. In other words, his standard for happiness is not what he receives or does not receive of this world. His standard for happiness is whether the work he has done will help him achieve his overall goal of pleasing Allah and attaining Allah's forgiveness and mercy.
- Paradise for the believer is like— indeed greater than— the joy a traveler feels when he finally reaches his destination and the joy that a person feels when he is finally in the company of those with whom he belongs, in the place where he belongs.

Summary of the Hadith

- A believer has one of two attitudes toward this worldly life: that of a stranger or that of a traveler along a path. His heart and his sights must be set on his real home and final resting place.
- The believer takes from this world the provisions that he needs to reach his final destination. He must always prepare for death and not expect to be living in this world forever.
- The believer takes advantage of those resources or opportunities that Allah has given him before it is too late. He takes advantage of his health before sickness comes to him and his life before death comes to him.

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[1] Quoted in al-Ramli, p. 15.

Hadith #41
“None of You Truly Believes Until...”

عَنْ أَبِي مُحَمَّدٍ عَبْدُ اللهِ بْنِ عَمْرِو بْنِ العَاصِ رَضِيَ اللهُ
عَنْهُمَا قَالَ رَسُوْلُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم لا يُؤْمِنُ
أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّى يَكُوْنَ هَوَاهُ تَبَعاً لِمَا جِئْتُ بِهِ
حَدِيْثٌ حَسَنٌ صَحِيْحٌ رَوَيْنَاهُ فِي كِتَابِ الحُجَّةِ بِإِسْنَادٍ
صَحِيْحٍ

On the authority of Abu Muhammad Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-As (may Allah be pleased with both of them) who said: The Messenger of Allah (may the blessings of Allah and peace be upon him) said, “None of you [truly] believes until his desire is subservient to what I came with.”
This is a *hasan sahih* hadith. We have narrated it in the book, *al-Hujjah*, with a *sahih* chain.

Selected Vocabulary

هواه - “his desire”; in general, this word refers to a person’s desires that take him away from the straight path; that is, desire for what is not true, correct or proper. However, it can also have a more general meaning of what one desires or wants, regardless of whether that desired object is praiseworthy or blameworthy.[1]
تبعا - “following”
جئت - “I came”

Takhreej

This hadith was recorded by ibn Abu Aasim in *al-Sunnah*,[2] ibn al-Jauzi in *Dhamm al-Hawaa*, al-Baghawi in *Sharh al-Sunnah*, *al-Anwaar* and

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[1] Cf., ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, pp. 398-399. Al-Baitaar (pp. 254-255) wrote, “Every human has desires and everyone has things that the soul inclines toward. However, the people themselves differ. Some of them follow their desires even if it is in opposition to the truth. Others submit to the truth even though it goes against what they desire. Some people even give up their desires on behalf of what other humans desire...”

[2] Note that in ascribing this hadith to the book, *al-Hujjah*, al-Nawawi did not follow what is known as proper or accepted procedure among the scholars of hadith. The proper way to ascribe hadith is by mentioning the earliest or the most eminent scholars who have recorded the hadith. In this particular case, scholars both earlier and more eminent than the author of *al-Hujjah* recorded this hadith.

Masaabeeh al-Sunnah, al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadi in *Tareekh Baghdaad*, al-Dailami in *al-Firdaus*, ibn Battah in *al-Ibaanah* and Abu al-Qaasim al-Asbahaani in *al-Hujjah*.[1] It was also recorded by al-Hasan ibn Sufyaan in *al-Arbaeen*, al-Salafi in *al-Arbaeen al-Buldaaniyah*, al-Harawi in *Dhamm al-Kalaam* and ibn Asaakir in *al-Arbaeen*.[2]

All of those scholars have recorded this hadith through the chain of Nuaim ibn Hammaad al-Khuzaa'ee. In most cases, it was Nuaim from Abdul Wahaab ibn Abdul Majeed al-Thaqafi from Hishaam ibn Hasaan from Muhammad ibn Sireen from Uqbah ibn Aus from Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-As. Except for Nuaim, all of those narrators are definitely acceptable narrators.[3] For the most part, the grading of this hadith is determined by how one views Nuaim ibn Hammaad.

Among the scholars who discussed Nuaim ibn Hammaad, it seems that ibn Hajr gives him the highest evaluation. In *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, ibn Hajr quotes most of what al-Mizi said about Nuaim in *Tahdheeb al-Kamaal*. Those quotes contain both favorable and unfavorable remarks. Then in his own discussion at the end, seemingly summarizing his views on Nuaim, ibn Hajr wrote,

> As for Nuaim, his righteousness and honesty is confirmed, but in his hadith are well-known gross errors. Al-Daaraqutni said about him, "Leader in the sunnah, lots of errors." Abu Ahmad al-Haakim said, "Perhaps he contradicts others in some of his hadith." It was already mentioned that ibn Adi followed up the mistakes he made, and that is the criterion for the statement concerning him [as to what hadith to accept and what to reject].[4]

Similarly, in *Taqreeb al-Tahdheeb*, which is basically a summary of his conclusions in *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, ibn Hajr described Nuaim with the words,

> Honest, makes lots of mistakes; jurist, most knowledgeable on laws of inheritance... Ibn Adi followed up the hadith in which he made errors and the rest of his hadith are sound.[5]

In his introduction to his commentary on *Sahih al-Bukhari*, ibn Hajr once again wrote about Nuaim,

> The great scholar (*haafidh*); al-Bukhaari met him but did not record anything from him in his *Sahih* except in one or two

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[1] Cf., ibn Muhammad, p. 224.

[2] Cf., Muhammad Naasir al-Deen al-Albaani, footnotes to Amr ibn al-Aasim, *Kitaab al-Sunnah* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islaami, 1985), vol. 1, pp. 12-13.

[3] However, there is also some question about Uqbah ibn Aus, as shall be noted later.

[4] Ahmad ibn Hajr, *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb* (Muassasat al-Risaalah), vol. 4, p. 236.

[5] See ibn Hajr's statements in Maroof and al-Arnaoot, vol. 4, p. 21.

> places,[1] and he recorded from him without stating the chains (*mualaq*) in other places. Muslim recorded from him in one place in the introduction to his work. The compilers of the *Sunan* works, save al-Nasaai, [also recorded from him]. Ahmad considered him trustworthy and said, "Nuaim was from the people of honesty, but he would be confused on some matters and would make errors concerning them." Al-Ajali called him trustworthy. Abu Haatim called him honest. Al-Nasaai called him weak. Abu Bishr al-Doolaabi stated that he had forged hadith. Ibn Adi commented on that, saying that al-Doolaabi was being extreme against him because [Nuaim] was extreme in his opposition to the scholars who used personal opinion (*ahl al-ra`i*). And that [ibn Adi's conclusion] is correct. And Allah knows best.[2]

Finally, in *Lisaan al-Meezaan*, a work on criticized narrators, ibn Hajr only wrote the following related to Nuaim's status, "Ahmad, Yahya and al-Ajali considered him trustworthy."[3]

One sees that ibn Hajr was very consistent in all four of his works quoted above. However, when comparing what he wrote with what others wrote, one does get the feeling that he overlooked something or ignored some facts concerning Nuaim. For example, ibn Hajr's *Lisaan al-Meezaan* is an abridgment and critical edition of al-Dhahabi's *Meezaan al-Itidaal*. However, ibn Hajr deleted all of the following disparaging remarks concerning Nuaim that are found in al-Dhahabi's work:

> ...One of the well-known leaders and scholars although he was weak (*layin*) in hadith... Abu Dawood said, "Nuaim has about twenty hadith on the authority of the Prophet (peace be upon him) for which there is no source." Al-Nasaai said [about him], "He is weak." Al-Haafidh Abu Ali al-Naisaboori said, "I heard al-Nasaai mention Nuaim ibn Hammaad's virtues and his advancement in knowledge, understanding and the sunnah. I asked him about accepting his hadith and he said, 'The reports that he alone narrates when compared to the well-known leading scholars of hadith are many. He reached the point that one cannot use him as evidence.'"... Al-Azdi said, "Nuaim was one of the people who would fabricate hadith in order to strengthen the place of the sunnah as well as [fabricate] false attributions to defame al-Numan [Abu Hanifah]. All of those are lies."... Ibn Yoonus said, "He would narrate rejected

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[1] It should be noted, as ibn Hajr did in his *Tahdheeb*, that al-Bukhari only recorded from Nuaim when others had narrated the same that Nuaim had narrated.

[2] Ahmad ibn Hajr, *Hadyu al-Saari Muqaddimah Fath al-Baari bi-Sharh Saheeh al-Bukhaari* (Makkah: al-Maktabah al-Tijaariyyah, 1993), p. 625.

[3] ibn Hajr, *Lisaan*, vol. 7, p. 417.

> reports [supposedly] on the authority of trustworthy narrators."[1]

To be impartial and just, at the very least, ibn Hajr should have recorded at least one of these statements in his work abridging *Lisaan.* Instead, he only mentioned three scholars who considered Nuaim trustworthy.

In addition, in *Lisaan*, ibn Hajr simply mentions that Yahya ibn Maeen considered Nuaim trustworthy. It is true that there are statements giving that impression from Yahya. At the same time, though, there are numerous statements from Yahya pointing out Nuaim's mistakes. Yahya also said of him, "His hadith are not [worth] anything, but he was one who followed the sunnah."[2] Again, ibn Hajr probably was not completely academic in only mentioning that Yahya considered him trustworthy, without providing more detail on the matter.

Ibn Hajr also gives the impression that ibn Adi followed up Nuaim's hadith and pointed out the weak and the rejected hadith. However, that does not seem to be exactly correct. In *al-Kaamil*, ibn Adi explicitly discussed ten rejected hadith revolving around Nuaim.[3] At the end of his discussion, he wrote,

> And from Nuaim ibn Hammaad there is more than what I have mentioned. Some people praised him and some people considered him weak. He was from those who was unyielding with respect to the sunnah. He died during the inquisition related to the Quran [and whether it was created] while he was in prison. *Most of what has been rejected from him* is what I have recorded. *And I hope* that the rest of his hadith are upright.[4]

Al-Dhahabi concluded about Nuaim, "Nuaim was of the greatest stores of knowledge. However, one's soul cannot rest [and feel satisfied] with his narrations... It is not allowed for anyone to use him as a proof. He compiled a book on the trials and tribulations that is filled with strange and rejected [reports]."[5]

Ibn Rajab also does not consider Nuaim an acceptable narrator of hadith. In his commentary to al-Nawawi's *Forty Hadith*, while discussing this particular hadith, ibn Rajab wrote,

> Declaring this hadith authentic is far-fetched for a number of reasons, including: [First,] it is a hadith that is singularly

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[1] al-Dhahabi, *Meezaan*, vol. 4, pp. 267-270. Virtually the same content may be found in another work by al-Dhahabi, *Al-Mughni fi al-Dhuafaa*, vol. 2, p. 700.

[2] Quoted in al-Mizi (ibn Hajr's source for *Tahdheeb*), vol. 29, p. 475.

[3] The hadith under discussion here, "None of you truly believes..." was not one of those ten hadith.

[4] Ibn Adi, vol. 7, p. 2485. Emphasis added.

[5] Al-Dhahabi, *Siyar*, vol. 10, p. 600 and p. 610.

> narrated by Nuaim ibn Hammaad al-Marwoozi. This Nuaim [is the problem], even though some scholars considered him trustworthy and al-Bukhari recorded from him. But the scholars of hadith had a good suspicion about him only because of his strong adherence to the sunnah and his harshness in refuting the people of desires [heretics]. They described him as committing mistakes and being confused about some hadith. However, when his stumbling into rejected reports became frequent, they ruled that he was weak. Saalih ibn Muhammad narrated that ibn Maeen was asked about him and he said, "He is not anything [worthy] but he did adhere to the sunnah." Saalih said, "He would narrate from his memory. And he has many rejected reports that are not corroborated at all." Abu Dawood said, "Nuaim has about twenty hadith on the authority of the Prophet (peace be upon him) for which there is no source." Al-Nasaai said [about him], "He is weak."[1] He also said on another occasion, "He is not trustworthy." He also said, "The reports that he alone narrates when compared to the well-known leading scholars of hadith are many. He reached the point that one cannot use him as evidence." Abu Zura al-Dimishqi said, "He would narrate hadith back to the Prophet (peace be upon him) that the others would narrate as statements of the Companions or Followers." Abu Uroobah al-Haraani said, "His affair is in a bad state." Abu Saeed ibn Yunus stated, "He narrated rejected reports [supposedly] on the authority of trustworthy narrators." Others claimed that he fabricated hadith. And where are the other students of Abdul Wahhaab al-Thaqafi, the other students of Hishaam ibn Hassaan and the other students of ibn Sireen such that Nuaim is the only one who narrated this hadith?[2]

Among modern day scholars, many reject Nuaim as a narrator. For example, al-Albaani said about Nuaim, "He is weak due to his many mistakes. In fact, some people accused him [of forging hadith]."[3]

Maroof wrote about Nuaim, while commenting on ibn Hajr's raising him to the level of *sadooq* (honest), "Strengthening his rank and considering his hadith *hasan* is very questionable since he had been accused of forging lies and some hadith to support his views (*madhhab*)."[4]

Maroof and al-Arnaoot, in their critical edition of ibn Hajr's *Taqreeb*, disagreed with ibn Hajr's classification of, "Honest, [but] he makes lots of mistakes." They wrote,

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[1] This is all al-Nasaai said about him in his work, *al-Dhuafaa wa al-Matrukoon* in Abdul Aziz al-Seeruwaan, p. 226

[2] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 394.

[3] Al-Albaani, footnotes to ibn al-Aasim, vol. 1, p. 12.

[4] Bashaar Maroof, footnotes to al-Mizi, vol. 29, p. 481.

> In fact, [he is] weak. More than one of the leading scholars [*a`immah*] considered him weak. However, others considered his case strong and praised him due to his strong support of the sunnah and his harshness in attacking its enemies, as well as for his unyielding position during the inquisition [related to the question of whether the Quran was created] until he died in chains while in prison, may Allah have mercy on him. Al-Bukhari recorded from him only in conjunction with other narrators.[1]

The conclusion concerning Nuaim is that he was a weak narrator due to his numerous mistakes. In particular, he was known to transmit many narrations that no one else had narrated. His strong adherence to the sunnah and his great opposition for those whom he felt were against the sunnah and his own views (and those opponents included Abu Hanifah and his student Muhammad ibn al-Hasan) make him suspect when it comes to him being the only one who narrated the hadith, "None of you truly believes until his desires are subservient to what I have brought.".

In addition, Ibn Rajab points out some other problems with this chain beyond the existence of Nuaim. He wrote,

> Another problem with the report is that the report has been narrated through Nuaim with different chains. It is narrated from him on the authority of al-Thaqafi on the authority of Hishaam. It is also narrated from him from al-Thaqafi from one of the teachers of Hishaam or from others. In that narration, the one from whom al-Thaqafi received it from is not specified. It is also narrated on his authority from al-Thaqafi who said, "One of our teachers narrated to us [saying]: Hishaam or someone else narrated to us." In that narration, al-Thaqafi narrated it from an unknown source and his source narrated it from an unspecified source. Hence, the [number of] unknown narrators is increased.
>
> Yet another problem with the report is that in its chain is Uqbah ibn Aus al-Sadoosi al-Basri. He is also called Yaqoob ibn Aus. Abu Dawood, al-Nasaai and ibn Maajah narrated one hadith on his authority from Abdullah ibn Amr. It is also stated [in other narrations] that it was Abdullah ibn Umar [instead]. Hence, there is some confusion in that chain. Al-Ajali, ibn Saad and ibn Hibbaan considered him [Uqbah] trustworthy. Ibn Khuzaima said, "Ibn Sireen, with his status and place, narrated on his authority." Ibn Abdul Barr said, "He is an unknown (*majhool*) narrator." Al-Ghulaabi said in his *Tareekh*, "They claim that he did not hear directly from

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[1] Maroof and al-Arnaoot, vol. 4, p. 21.

Abdullah ibn Amr. He would only say, 'Abdullah ibn Amr said.'[1]" Based on that, his narrations from Abdullah ibn Amr have a broken chain.[2]

Therefore, this hadith has been declared weak by the following note scholars of hadith: ibn Asaakir,[3] ibn Rajab, al-Albaani,[4] al-Arnaoot[5], al-Hilaali[6], ibn Muhammad[7] and al-Ahdab.[8]

Allah knows best.[9]

General Comments About the Hadith

Although this is a weak hadith, there is nothing wrong, as such, with its meaning. Indeed, the meaning it expresses may be proven through numerous other authentic pieces of evidence. For example, Allah says in the Quran,

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا مُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَى ٱللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُۥٓ أَمْرًا أَن يَكُونَ لَهُمُ
ٱلْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ ۗ وَمَن يَعْصِ ٱللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُۥ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَٰلًا مُّبِينًا

"It is not for a believer, man or woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decreed a matter that they should have any option in their decision. And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he has indeed strayed into a plain error" (*al-Ahzaab* 36).

In another verse, Allah says,

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[1] When a person says, "Abdullah ibn Amr said," it does not necessarily imply that he heard the narration directly from Abdullah. The case would be different had he said, for example, "I heard Abdullah say," or "Abdullah narrated to me." If Uqbah always said only, "Abdullah ibn Amr said," it may be taken as a sign that he did not hear such hadith directly from Abdullah ibn Amr but through some intermediate, unnamed source.

[2] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, pp. 394-395.

[3] As quoted in al-Albaani, footnotes to ibn al-Aasim, vol. 1, p. 13.

[4] Al-Albaani, footnotes to ibn al-Aasim, vol. 1, p. 12.

[5] See his footnotes to al-Hussain al-Baghawi, *Sharh Sunnah* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islaami, 1983), vol. 1, p. 213.

[6] Al-Hilaali, *Eeqaadh*, p. 552.

[7] Ibn Muhammad, pp. 224-225.

[8] Al-Ahdab, vol. 4, pp. 168-172.

[9] In a phone conversation with Dr. al-Houcine Chouat (August 1998), Dr. Chouat indicated to this author that this hadith has supporting evidence in a work by al-Daaraqutni. He stated that this supporting evidence would raise this hadith to the level of *hasan*. Unfortunately, by the publication date of this book, Dr. Chouat, due to his numerous commitments, had not the opportunity to furnish this author with the particulars to confirm his statement. Furthermore, this author could not find any author who has made a statement similar to Dr. Chouat's claim. This author has to make a conclusion based on the evidence available to him. Therefore, at this time, the conclusion is that the hadith is weak unless evidence is provided that shows otherwise.

فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُواْ

فِىٓ أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُواْ تَسْلِيمًا

“But no, by your Lord, they have no faith until they make you [O Muhammad] judge in all disputes between them, and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions and they submit to them with a full submission.” (*al-Nisaa* 65).

Another verse states,

يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ لَا تُقَدِّمُواْ بَيْنَ يَدَىِ ٱللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِۦ ۖ وَٱتَّقُواْ ٱللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ

سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ① يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ لَا تَرْفَعُوٓاْ أَصْوَٰتَكُمْ فَوْقَ صَوْتِ ٱلنَّبِىِّ

“O you who believe, do not put [yourselves] before Allah and His Messenger but fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is Hearing and Knowing. O you who believe, do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet...” (*al-Hujuraat* 1-2).

In addition, Allah has censured those who dislike anything that Allah loves or who love what Allah dislikes. For example, Allah has said,

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَرِهُواْ مَآ أَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُ فَأَحْبَطَ أَعْمَـٰلَهُمْ

“That is because they dislike what Allah reveals and, therefore, their deeds are rendered vain” (*Muhammad* 9).

Ibn Rajab wrote,

> It is obligatory upon every believer to love what Allah loves— a love that requires him to perform what He has made obligatory upon them. If that love is increased, such that one also performs what He has recommended, that is more virtuous. [It is also obligatory upon every believer] to dislike what Allah dislikes— a dislike that obliges him to remain away from what He has forbidden for him. If that dislike is increased such that it makes the person stay away from He dislikes in a lighter sense, that is more virtuous.[1]

Ibn Rajab also quoted Abu Yaqoob al-Nahrujoori as saying, “For everyone who claims to love Allah but does not comply with what Allah has ordered, his claim [to love Allah] is false. And everyone who loves but does not fear Allah has been deceived.”[2]

There is also no question that one’s desires can be of great harm to one’s religion. Indeed, Ibn Rajab pointed out that every sin is the result of a person’s putting the desires of his soul above his love for Allah and His messenger. Allah has described the polytheists as those who follow their own desires. For that reason, Allah has said about them,

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[1] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, pp. 395-396.

[2] Quoted in ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 397.

فَإِن لَّمۡ يَسۡتَجِيبُواْ لَكَ فَٱعۡلَمۡ أَنَّمَا يَتَّبِعُونَ أَهۡوَآءَهُمۡۚ وَمَنۡ أَضَلُّ مِمَّنِ
ٱتَّبَعَ هَوَىٰهُ بِغَيۡرِ هُدٗى مِّنَ ٱللَّهِۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَهۡدِي ٱلۡقَوۡمَ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ

"But if they do not respond to you, then know that they only follow their desires. And who is more astray than one who follows his desire without guidance from Allah? Indeed, Allah does not guide the wrongdoing folk" (*al-Qasas* 50). The same is true for the heretics. They prefer that to which their desires have led them over and above what is clear in the Quran and sunnah. This is why historically they have been referred to by the scholars as *ahl al-ahwaa* ("the people of desires").[1]

The believer realizes what comes from Allah is always best for humanity. He realizes that Allah is the Creator and knows His creation best. He realizes that humans are weak and, although they claim a great deal of knowledge, they, in reality, know very little of the true make-up of this universe. Hence, the believer should always be willing to ignore his desires or what he feels whenever it comes into conflict with what Allah has revealed in the Quran or sunnah.

The Reality of Those who Go Against what the Prophet (peace be upon him) Brought

In an illuminating passage, ibn Taimiya discussed the reality or the situation of those who decide to go against what the Prophet (peace be upon him) brought. This is an important topic to discuss as there are still many Muslims who, unfortunately, feel hesitant when it comes to following the sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Therefore, ibn Taimiya's passage will be quoted here at length. He wrote,

> Whoever diverges from what the Prophet (peace be upon him) brought has no knowledge or justice in what he says [or believes]. In fact, all he could have is ignorance, wrongdoing, conjecture and "what the souls desire although the guidance has come to them from their Lord" (*al-Najm* 23). This is because whatever the Messenger (peace be upon him) has reported is truth, esoterically and exoterically. It is not possible to conceive of truth being in the opposite of what he has said. Therefore, whoever believes something that goes against what he said has a belief that is false. A false belief cannot be knowledge. And what the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) ordered is just, containing no wrong in it. Whoever

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[1] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 397.

> forbids what he ordered, forbids what is just. Whoever orders the opposite of what he ordered has indeed ordered wrongdoing (*dhulm*), for the opposite of what is just is *dhulm*. And what goes against what he is said can only be ignorance, wrongdoing conjecture and what the souls desire. It must be in one of two cases. The best case is that it is something that was part of the *shareeah* of one of the prophets but has been since abrogated. The worst case is that it has never been sanctioned; instead, it has been something that has been substituted for the *shareeah*. Everything that goes against the ruling of Allah or His Messenger is either from an abrogated *shareeah* or from what has been legislated as a replacement to what Allah has sanctioned. A [false] lawgiver has sanctioned that without permission from Allah, as He said, "Do they have partners [with Allah] who have sanctioned for them of the religion what Allah has not given them permission for" (*al-Shoora* 21).[1]

He then goes on to say that in some cases, the ruling may have been obscure and the person was mistaken in his *ijtihaad* and that is why he went against what the Prophet (peace be upon him) brought. As was discussed under an earlier hadith, such a person may be excused as long as he had the intention to adhere to what the Prophet (peace be upon him) brought. He said that as time passed, more and more people were unaware of some parts of the sunnah, so they made more mistakes although they intended to follow the Prophet (peace be upon him). Furthermore, they may have had many good deeds that wipe away any their sin or their shortcoming with respect to their *ijtihaad*. Then he goes on to write,

> The point here is that the one who [willingly] goes against the messenger must certainly be following conjecture and what the souls desire. Allah says about the polytheists who worshipped al-Laat and al-Uzza[2], "They follow only conjecture and what the souls lust after while the guidance from their Lord has come to them" (*al-Najm* 23). Similarly, Allah states about those who said that the angels are females, "Those who believe not in the Hereafter name the angels with female names. But they have no knowledge thereof. They follow nothing but conjecture and conjecture avails nothing against the truth" (*al-Najm* 27-28)... However, He says about what the Messenger (peace be upon him) brought, "By the star when it goes down, your companion [the Prophet (peace be upon him)] is neither astray nor being misled. Nor does he say anything out of [his own] desires. It is no less than inspiration sent down to him, which the one mighty in power [the Angel Gabriel] has taught

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[1] Ibn Taimiya, *Majmooat*, vol. 7, part 13, pp. 37-38.

[2] These were two idols of the Arabian peninsula during the Period of Ignorance.

> him" (*al-Najm* 1-5). So everyone who goes against what the messenger taught must be following conjecture or what the soul lusts for. Even if he believes what he says and he has an argument to support his view, the most that he could have is a conjecture that cannot avail at all against the truth. Such is the case when they argue by false analogies, fabricated reports or [supposed] inspired words that they believe have come from Allah whereas they have actually come from Satan.
>
> These are the three basis upon which those who oppose the sunnah argue and they believe them to be proofs and evidences. Either they argue on the basis of a rational argument that they see as a definitive proof and argument while it is a wrong misconception made up of vague terms and concepts and obscure arguments concerning which one cannot discern what is its truth from its falsehood… Or they argue on the basis of a hadith which is either a fabrication or which does not prove what these opponents of the Prophet (peace be upon him) claim it proves… [As for those who believe they have received inspiration, such does occur at times] however, there are inspirations that are thought to have come from God but they do not do so. People fail to distinguish between a true inspiration and a false inspiration, in the same way that they fail to distinguish between a correct argument, rational or textual, and a false one. Sometimes such people hear a speech or they see something and that communication is actually from Satan… These people actually follow nothing but conjecture that cannot avail them against the truth at all. If they do not put themselves [and their views] before Allah and His Messenger and had they instead adhered to the Book and the sunnah, it would have been made clear to them [that such inspirations that go against what the Prophet (peace be upon him) brought could only be] from Satan.[1]

Ibn Taimiya then goes on to discuss the case of Umar ibn al-Khattaab who was described by the Prophet (peace be upon him) that if anyone from this nation were to receive such inspiration, it would be Umar. However, Umar himself never relied solely on such inspiration and he never did anything until he was certain that it did not go against the Quran or sunnah.

About the Narrator: Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-As

Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-As, from the tribe of Quraish, was a noted Companion, as was his father. Abdullah embraced Islam before his father did. His name before embracing Islam was *al-Aas* (العاص), whose meaning is disobedient or rebellious. Due to the dislike of having names with bad meanings to them, the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself changed it to Abdullah.

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[1] Ibn Taimiya, *Majmuaat*, vol. 7, part 13, pp. 39-42.

Abdullah was among the few people who knew who to read and write in the pre-Islamic days. He received permission from the Prophet (peace be upon him) to record everything that he heard from the Prophet (peace be upon him). In fact, Abu Huraira once noted that the only one who could have more hadith than him was Abdullah, because Abdullah used to record the hadith while Abu Huraira did not.

He also used to fast often and pray during the nights. His father complained to the Prophet (peace be upon him) about how much Abdullah was devoted to such acts of worship. Therefore the Prophet (peace be upon him) had to advise Abdullah, "Your soul has a right over you; your wife has a right over you..." Near the end of his life, he became blind and weak, and he came to regret that he had not heeded the Prophet's advice to greatly lessen his acts of worship.

He participated in several battles of the Prophet (peace be upon him). He also participated in a number of the battles after the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him), such as the Battle of Yarmook.

During the Battle of Sifeen, he was with Muawiya against Ali. However, afterwards, he felt very sorry for having participated in such a campaign and continually asked Allah to forgive him.

He lived with his father in Egypt after the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him). After his father died, Abdullah moved to Greater Syria and then back to Makkah. He died in the year 65 A.H. at the age of 72.

In the books of hadith, over 700 hadith have been recorded on Abdullah's authority.

"We have narrated it in the book, *al-Hujjah...*"

This is a reference to the book *al-Hujjah ala Taarik al-Muhijjah* by Abu al-Fath Nasr ibn Ibraaheem al-Maqdisi al-Shafi'ee. This is a book about Islamic beliefs and articles of faith based on the Quran and sunnah.[1] Al-Haitami describes it as a good and beneficial work.[2]

Abu al-Fath was born sometime before the year 410 A.H. and moved to Damascus before 430 A.H. In Damascus, he learned *Sahih al-Bukhari* and fiqh from the leading scholars of his time. He studied with al-Daarimi. He also met and debated Abu Haamid al-Ghazzaali. He was also well known for his piety and lack of desire for the things of this world.[3]

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[1] Cf., ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 393.

[2] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 279.

[3] For more about his life, see al-Dhahabi, *Siyar*, vol. 19, pp. 136-143.

Summary of the Hadith

- It is concluded that this hadith is weak. Although there is no problem with the meaning of the hadith, there is no call for anyone to quote it as a statement of the Prophet (peace be upon him). There are sufficient other authentic and acceptable evidences to prove the same point that this hadith states.

Hadith #42

“O son of Adam, as long as you call on Me...”

عَنْ أَنَسٍ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله
عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ قَالَ اللَّهُ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى يَا ابْنَ آدَمَ إِنَّكَ مَا
دَعَوْتَنِي وَرَجَوْتَنِي غَفَرْتُ لَكَ عَلَى مَا كَانَ مِنْكَ وَلا أُبَالِي
يَا ابْنَ آدَمَ لَوْ بَلَغَتْ ذُنُوبُكَ عَنَانَ السَّمَاءِ ثُمَّ اسْتَغْفَرْتَنِي
غَفَرْتُ لَكَ وَلا أُبَالِي يَا ابْنَ آدَمَ إِنَّكَ لَوْ أَتَيْتَنِي بِقُرَابِ
الْأَرْضِ خَطَايَا ثُمَّ لَقِيتَنِي لا تُشْرِكُ بِي شَيْئًا لَأَتَيْتُكَ بِقُرَابِهَا
مَغْفِرَةً

رَوَاهُ التِّرْمِذِيُّ وَقَالَ حَدِيْثٌ حَسَنٌ صَحِيْحٌ

On the authority of Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (blessings of Allah and peace be upon him) say, “Allah, Blessed and Most High, said, ‘O son of Adam, as long as you call upon Me and put your hope in Me, I have forgiven you for what you have done and I do not mind. O son of Adam, if your sins were to reach the clouds of the sky and then you would seek My forgiveness, I would forgive you. O son of Adam, if you were to come to Me with sins that are close to filling the Earth and you would then meet Me without ascribing any partners with Me, I would certainly [also] bring to you forgiveness close to filling it [the Earth].”

Recorded by al-Tirmidhi and he said, “It is a *hasan sahih* hadith.”

Selected Vocabulary

ما	- the word ما often times means a negation or whatever; however, in this case its meaning is, “as long as”

دعوتني	- "you called upon me, you invoked me, you prayed to me," the تَ (*ta* with a *fatha* at the end of a verb) implies second person, past tense; the ني implies, "toward me, to me"
رجوتني	- "put your hope in me," again, the تَ (*ta* with a *fatha* at the end of a verb) implies second person, past tense; the ني implies, "toward me, in me"
غفرت	- "I have forgiven," the تُ (*ta* with a *dhamma* at the end of a verb) implies first person, past tense
لك	- "for you"
ما	- here the ما means "whatever"
لا أبالي	- this expression implies, "I do not care, I do not mind, I do not disapprove, it is no problem for me"
بلغت	- "reached," third person, feminine, past tense; it is in reference to the following word, "your sins"; since, "sins" is a plural of a thing, it is treated like a feminine singular noun
ذنوبك	- "your sins," the "your" part is designated by the ك at the end
عنان	- "clouds," others say that it means everything that one sees upon looking up to the skies
استغفرتني	- "you sought my forgiveness"; again, the تَ (*ta* with a *fatha* at the end of a verb) implies second person, past tense; the ني implies, "toward me, in me"
أتيتني	- "you came to me," (in this case, it is precede by لو or if, so its meaning is changed to, "you were to come to me"); the analysis of the ت and ني at the end is the same as the three examples given above.
بقراب	- this is a compound word, the ب means, "with," while قراب usually means something near to or similar to something else but, in this case, the narrator in *Musnad Ahmad* has explained it to mean, "the fill of" the Earth or close to the fill of the Earth.
خطايا	- "sins"
لأتيتك	- "I certainly come to you," the first ل is for emphasis
مغفرة	- "forgiveness"

Takhreej

This hadith, with this wording and chain, was only recorded by al-Tirmidhi. He recorded it through the chain, "Abdullah ibn Ishaaq al-Jauhari al-Basri narrated to us and said: Abu Aasim narrated to us and said: Katheer ibn Faaid said: Saeed ibn Ubaid narrated to us and said: I heard Bakr ibn Abdullah al-Muzani say: Anas ibn Maalik narrated to us..."

Ibn Rajab described this chain by saying, "There is no harm in it."[1] This usually implies that the chain is acceptable. However, upon closer inspection that may not be exactly correct.

The narrators in this chain are as follows:

(1) Abdullah ibn Ishaaq al-Jauhari al-Basri: Abdullah was a trustworthy narrator. Abu Haatim called him *shaikh*, meaning his hadith are acceptable. Ibn Hibbaan included him in his work on trustworthy narrators and

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[1] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 400.

stated that his hadith are sound or upright.[1] Ibn Hajr concluded that he is, *thiqatun haafidh* (trustworthy, scholar or preserver of hadith). Maroof and al-Arnaoot disagree somewhat and call him, *sadooq* (honest).[2] In any case, therefore, his hadith are at least of the level of *hasan*.

(2) Abu Aasim al-Dhahhaak ibn Makhlad ibn al-Dhahhaak: Al-Dhahaak was a very famous and well-known scholar of hadith. He was declared a trustworthy narrator by numerous scholars of hadith, including Yahya ibn Maeen, al-Ijli, al-Khaleeli and others.[3]

(3) Katheer ibn Faaid al-Basri: In both *al-Kamaal* and *Tahdheeb*, neither al-Mizi nor ibn Hajr mention anything regarding Katheer's status as a narrator.[4] They mention that ibn Hibbaan has mentioned him in his book *al-Thiqaat*, a collection of trustworthy narrators. However, it was the practice of ibn Hibbaan to include in that book narrators whose status are not really known as long as he knows of no one who has criticized such narrators. In other words, he gives them the benefit of the doubt and includes them among the trustworthy narrators. Hence, appearing in ibn Hibbaan's *Thiqaat* is not in itself sufficient to establish the trustworthiness or acceptability of a narrator. It was perhaps the influence of ibn Hibbaan's grading that led ibn Hajr, in *Taqreeb al-Tahdheeb*, to call Katheer *maqbool* ("acceptable"), meaning his hadith are acceptable if they are supported by others but not when he is alone in narrating something. In their critical edition of *Taqreeb*, Maroof and al-Arnaoot are certainly correct when they disagree with ibn Hajr and state, instead, "He is *majhool al-haal* (it is known who he is but his status is not known) as only two narrators have ever narrated from him."[5]

(4) Saeed ibn Ubaid al-Hunaa`ee: Saeed was thought of highly by those scholars who discussed him. Abu Haatim called him a *shaikh* (meaning his hadith are acceptable). Ibn Hibbaan also included him in *al-Thiqaat*, his book of trustworthy narrators.[6] The well known critic of narrators, ibn Shaaheen called him trustworthy.[7] Ibn Hajr said, "There is no harm with him," which is a ranking just below the level of "trustworthy".[8] Maroof and al-Arnaoot are in agreement with ibn Hajr's conclusion.[9]

(5) Bakr ibn Abdullah al-Muzani: Bakr is unquestionably a completely trustworthy and acceptable narrator.[10]

(6) Anas ibn Maalik: He was a well-known Companion of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and unquestionably acceptable as a narrator of hadith.

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[1] Cf., ibn Hajr, *Tahdheeb*, vol. 2, pp. 302-303.

[2] Maroof and al-Arnaoot, vol. 2, p. 192.

[3] See his entry in ibn Hajr, *Tahdheeb*, vol. 2, pp. 225-226; Maroof and al-Arnaoot, vol. 2, p. 149.

[4] Al-Mizi, vol. 24, p. 144; ibn Hajr, *Tahdheeb*, vol. 3, p. 464.

[5] Maroof and al-Arnaoot, vol. 3, p. 194.

[6] Cf., al-Mizi, vol. 10, pp. 550-551.

[7] Umar ibn Shaaheen, *Tareekh Asmaa al-Thiqaat* (Kuwait: al-Daar al-Salafiyyah, 1984), p. 97.

[8] Ibn Hajr, *Taqreeb*, vol. 2, p. 38.

[9] Maroof and al-Arnaoot, vol. 2, p. 38.

[10] For more about Bakr, see ibn Hajr, *Tahdheeb*, vol. 1, p. 244.

The conclusion concerning that chain is that it is a weak chain due to the presence of a narrator who is termed, *majhool al-haal*. However, by acceptable supporting evidence, the hadith can be moved up to the level of *hasan*. Fortunately, in this case, there is such supporting evidence.

Indeed, Ahmad and others have recorded hadith with virtually the same meaning as Anas' hadith. Those hadith have been narrated through various chains on the authority of the Companion Abu Dharr. For example, Ahmad has recorded the following hadith *qudsi*:

ابْنَ آدَمَ إِنَّكَ مَا دَعَوْتَنِي وَرَجَوْتَنِي غَفَرْتُ لَكَ عَلَى مَا كَانَ فِيكَ ابْنَ آدَمَ إِنْ تَلْقَنِي
بِقُرَابِ الأَرْضِ خَطَايَا لَقِيتُكَ بِقُرَابِهَا مَغْفِرَةً بَعْدَ أَنْ لا تُشْرِكَ بِي شَيْئًا ابْنَ آدَمَ إِنَّكَ إِنْ
تُذْنِبْ حَتَّى يَبْلُغَ ذَنْبُكَ عَنَانَ السَّمَاءِ ثُمَّ تَسْتَغْفِرُنِي أَغْفِرْ لَكَ وَلا أُبَالِ

"Son of Adam, as long as you invoke Me and put your hope in Me, I forgive you with all that you have [of sins]. Son of Adam, if you meet Me with almost the Earth full of sins, I would certainly meet you with its fill of forgiveness [but only] after you have not ascribed any partner to me. Son of Adam, if you commit sins to the point that they reach the clouds of the sky and then you seek My forgiveness, I forgive you and I do not mind."

These variable hadith have chains that are at least acceptable as supporting evidence.

Ahmad and others have recorded the following hadith *qudsi* on the authority of Abu Dharr:

يَا عَبْدِي مَا عَبَدْتَنِي وَرَجَوْتَنِي فَإِنِّي غَافِرٌ لَكَ عَلَى مَا كَانَ فِيكَ وَيَا عَبْدِي إِنْ لَقِيتَنِي
بِقُرَابِ الأَرْضِ خَطِيئَةً مَا لَمْ تُشْرِكْ بِي لَقِيتُكَ بِقُرَابِهَا مَغْفِرَةً

"O my servant, as long as you worship Me and put your hope in Me, I forgive you with what you have. And O My servant, if you meet Me with an Earth nearly full of sins, and you had not associated any partners with Me, I would meet you with the same full of forgiveness."

Ahmad and al-Haakim record a hadith on the authority of Abu Dharr which supports part of the above hadith. It is also a hadith *qudsi* worded as follows,

وَلَوْ لَقِيتَنِي بِقُرَابِ الأَرْضِ خَطَايَا مَا لَمْ تُشْرِكْ بِي لَقِيتُكَ بِقُرَابِهَا مَغْفِرَةً

"If you were to meet Me with almost the earth filled with sins but had not ascribed any partner to Me, I would meet you with the same fill of forgiveness." Ahmad recorded this hadith with two chains, and one is of *sahih* or *hasan* quality. Al-Haakim declared its chain *sahih* and al-Dhahabi agreed with him.[1]

Based on the various supporting reports, the conclusion is that this hadith is definitely either *hasan* or *sahih*. Ibn Rajab accepts the hadith although he did not grade it explicitly *sahih* or *hasan*.[2] Others have graded the hadith *hasan*, including ibn Muhammad[3] and Abdul Qaadir al-Arnaoot.[4] It was graded *sahih* by al-Suyooti,[5] al-Albaani[6] and al-Hilaali.[7]

It should be noted that at the end of the hadith, al-Nawawi stated that al-Tirmidhi called the hadith, "*hasan sahih*." However, none of the numerous copies of al-Tirmidhi that this author has been able to check contains that wording. Instead, almost all of them have the wording, "This hadith is *hasan ghareeb*, we do not know it except through that chain." This is also the quote that ibn Rajab has from al-Tirmidhi in *Jaami al-Uloom wa al-Hikm*.[8] The edition edited by Kamaal al-Hoot has the wording, "This hadith is *ghareeb*; we do not know it except through that chain."[9] Al-Haitami states that in some of the manuscripts, al-Tirmidhi simply called this hadith *hasan*.[10] Indeed, in al-Nawawi's own *Riyaadh al-Saaliheen* he also mentions that al-Tirmidhi called this hadith *hasan*.[11]

As noted earlier, many of the copies of al-Tirmidhi's work have different comments for him after different hadith. This is one of the problems in dealing with al-Tirmidhi's work. However, in this case, this author could find no other source describing this hadith as *hasan sahih*. It is possible that this was simply a mistake on the part of al-Nawawi. Allah knows best.

General Comments About the Hadith

According to al-Bugha and Mistu, this hadith gives the most hope to the humans of all of the hadith found in the sunnah. It demonstrates Allah's great forgiveness and mercy so that no one should despair due to the great number of sins he has committed. However, at the same time, no one should be deceived or misled by his sins such that, due to his lackadaisical approach to sins, they end up creating a barrier between himself and Allah's forgiveness and mercy.[1] In other words, forgiveness is still according to Allah's will and He bestows it upon whom He wills.

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[1] Cf., ibn Muhammad, p. 226.
[2] Cf., Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 400.
[3] Cf., ibn Muhammd, pp. 226-228.
[4] Abdul Qaadir al-Arnaoot, vol. 8, p. 40.
[5] As in al-Munaawi, vol. 4, p. 496. Al-Munaawi himself did not comment on al-Suyooti's grading, implying his approval.
[6] Al-Albaani, *Saheeh Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, vol. 3, p. 176.
[7] al-Hilaali, *Saheeh Kitaab al-Adhkaar*, vol. 2, pp. 975-976,
[8] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 400.
[9] Muhammad ibn Isa al-Tirmidhi, *Al-Jaami al-Saheeh wa Huwa Sunan al-Tirmidhi* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1987), vol. 5, p. 512.
[10] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 286.
[11] Al-Nawawi, *Riyaadh*, p. 178.

About the Narrator: Anas ibn Maalik

Anas ibn Maalik was discussed in the commentary to Hadith #13.

"Allah, Blessed and Most High, said"

That means that this is a *qudsi* hadith. The nature of *qudsi* hadith was discussed in detail in the commentary to Hadith #24.

"O son of Adam"

This is a call from Allah to every human being. Allah is the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful. He is calling out to all humans, with a call of forgiveness and mercy. Allah is willing to forgive. Neither the committing of sins by humans nor the forgiving of sins by Allah harms Allah in any way. Allah has decreed for Himself mercy and He is ready to shower His grace and blessings upon all humans.

However, Allah only showers His forgiveness upon those who have performed the causes that lead to it, those who continue to call on Him and put their hope in Him while not associating any partner with Him.

In reality, Allah does not ask much of His slaves. The least that He asks is that one believe in Him and not associate any partner with Him. He has made His signs clear, such that no one should disbelieve in Him or associate partners with Him. He has even created humans with a nature that recognizes Allah's existence and uniqueness. He asks this, and in return He grants forgiveness and Paradise.

There may be some significance to Allah calling humans, "son of Adam" in this hadith instead of referring to them by other terms, such as "mankind," "My servants," and so on. This is because it was Adam who committed the first sin. At the same time, it was Adam's example that showed mankind the result of sin and how one can turn to Allah and be forgiven. This gives hope to all who come afterwards that even though they have sinned, the door is open for them to repent to Allah and be forgiven.[2]

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[1] Al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 357.

[2] Cf., Sultaan, p. 359.

"As long as you call upon Me"

Linguistically, *dua* (translated above as "call upon") may be defined as, "the act of seeking, desiring, asking or demanding."[1] The Maliki jurist ibn al-Arabi has given its *shareeah* definition as: *Dua* is the calling upon Allah for some good that one wants or for the repelling of some harm or trial; supplications are a means or "cause" for what one has requested; finally, supplications bring about the mercy of the Lord and repel His anger, in a manner similar to a shield repelling a spear.[2]

That is what has been given as a definition for *dua* by a renowned scholar. However, the essence of *dua* has been explained by al-Yafi'ee: *Dua* is the displaying of one's need for Allah and the showing that one actually has no power or might in or by himself. It is the essence of submission and servitude, and it is the feeling of humility, submissiveness and humanness. It also contains an aspect of praising Allah as one recognizes and attributes to Him the qualities of generosity and kindness to His servants.[3]

As was noted in commentaries to previous hadith, since humans do not possess any real power to hurt or help themselves, they are never in a situation in which they are not in need of Allah's help, support and guidance. Whether in hardship or ease, illness or health, good times or bad, believers always turn to Allah to ask for guidance and what is best, as well as to seek forgiveness for their sins and shortcomings.[4]

The Importance of *Dua* (Supplications) and Its Conditions

In the commentary to Hadith #18, there was a discussion of the ways by which Allah removes sins and punishment from believers so that they may avoid any punishment in the Hereafter. In the commentary to this particular hadith, the emphasis will be on the factors leading to Allah's forgiveness.

Supplicating or praying to Allah with the hope and trust that such supplications will be responded to is one of the keys to attaining Allah's forgiveness. Praying to Allah is a form of worship that is beloved to Allah. Therefore, Allah responds to that act of worship. Allah says in the Quran,

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[1] Lane, vol. 1, p. 883. The word *dawah* or *dua* and its various derivatives has been used to convey a number of different meanings in the Quran. See Faalih al-Sughair, Introduction to Abdul Ghaani al-Maqdisi, *Al-Targheeb fi al-Dua wa al-Hath Alaihi* (Riyadh: Daar al-Aasima, 1996), pp. 55-59.

[2] Ibn al-Arabi was quoted in al-Sughair, p. 54, and in al-Uroosi, vol. 1, p. 46. For greater detail on the linguistic and Shariah definition of *dua*, see al-Uroosi, vol. 1, pp. 19-103.

[3] Al-Yafi'ee was quoted in al-Sughair, p. 54.

[4] This is very different from the ways of the disbelievers who, because in their soul they recognize the presence of the Creator and the Lord, turn to Him and pray earnestly during times of hardship and then forget about Him during the rest of their lives. On this point, one should note the following verses of the Quran: *Yoonus* 12, *al-Zumar* 8, *al-Zumar* 49, *Luqmaan* 33 and *Fussilat* 51.

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمُ ٱدْعُونِىٓ أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِى
سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ

"And your Lord says, 'Call upon Me, I will respond to you.' Indeed, those who disdain my worship will enter Hell [rendered] contemptible" (*Ghaafir* 60). The Prophet (peace be upon him) once said,

الدُّعَاءُ هُوَ الْعِبَادَةُ

"Supplication (*dua*) is the essence of worship." And then he recited the above verse from *Soorah Ghaafir*.[1] Al-Bugha and Mistu explained the above phenomena by saying, "Allah does not bless a servant by guiding him to supplicating and submitting to Him except that He also blesses him by accepting [his request] and responding to it."[2]

However, in general, the supplication is only answered if the supplicant meets some conditions and avoids what prevents its acceptance. One of the most important of those conditions is that the heart be truly attentive and conscious of what it is saying. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated,

ادْعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَنْتُمْ مُوقِنُونَ بِالإِجَابَةِ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ لا يَسْتَجِيبُ دُعَاءً مِنْ قَلْبٍ غَافِلٍ لاهٍ

"Supplicate Allah while you are certain of a response. And know that Allah does not respond to a supplication from a heart that is heedless and inattentive."[3]

In addition, while supplicating to Allah, one must be resolute or decisive in his request. The person must supplicate with seriousness and sincerity. There should be no wavering or doubt in his heart. The Prophet (peace be upon him) taught that one should not say, "O Allah, forgive me if You will." The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

إِذَا دَعَا أَحَدُكُمْ فَلا يَقُلِ اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي إِنْ شِئْتَ وَلَكِنْ لِيَعْزِمِ الْمَسْأَلَةَ وَلْيُعَظِّمِ الرَّغْبَةَ
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لا يَتَعَاظَمُهُ شَيْءٌ أَعْطَاهُ

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[1] Recorded by al-Tirmidhi. According to al-Albaani, it is *sahih*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 1, p. 641.

[2] Al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 358.

[3] Recorded by al-Tirmidhi. According to al-Albaani, it is *hasan*. See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 1, p. 108.

"If one of you supplicates, do not say, 'O Allah, forgive me if You will.' But instead you should ask with will and conviction, for there is nothing so great to Allah that He cannot grant it." (Recorded by Muslim.)

While supplicating, one should truly beseech Allah and implore His forgiveness. One should sincerely demonstrate his need for Allah and his submission to Him as well as his hope in receiving the desired response from Allah. When doing so, the mercy and forgiveness is close at hand. Allah says,

وَٱدْعُوهُ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا ۚ إِنَّ رَحْمَتَ ٱللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ مِّنَ ٱلْمُحْسِنِينَ

"And invoke Him in fear and aspiration. Indeed, the mercy of Allah is near to the doers of good" (*al-Araaf* 56).

Another important aspect of supplicating is that the supplicant not become hasty and stop his supplications because his hoped-for response has not come as soon as he wished. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

يُسْتَجَابُ لأَحَدِكُمْ مَا لَمْ يَعْجَلْ فَيَقُولُ قَدْ دَعَوْتُ فَلا أَوْ فَلَمْ يُسْتَجَبْ لِي

"You are responded to as long as you do not become hasty and say, 'I supplicated and it is not being or was not responded to.'" (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

Finally, for one's supplications to be responded to, it is important that one ensures that he is living off of permissible and good sources. This was discussed in detail in the commentary to Hadith #10.

"and put your hope in Me"

Al-Baitaar notes that Allah knows how weak humans truly are. Sometimes one is overcome by his desires or Satan while at other times he is able to overrule them. However, he is constantly in that struggle. Whenever he does something he knows to be wrong, it is crucial that he returns to Allah, calls upon Allah asking for forgiveness and puts his hope in Allah that He will forgive him. He will then find Allah always willing to forgive him and rescue him. As long as the human is in that state, he is in a state of goodness, and his end result, Allah willing, will be good.[1]

Putting one's hope in Allah, according to al-Bugha and Mistu, means fearing Allah's punishment while at the same time hoping for His forgiveness. It is hoping for the mercy of Allah while fearing His greatness and power.[2]

A believer should also have good expectations of Allah. There is a hadith which states,

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[1] Cf., al-Baitaar, p. 258.

[2] Al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 356. They even say that "hope" can have the meaning of "fear".

قَالَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ أَنَا عِنْدَ ظَنِّ عَبْدِي بِي وَأَنَا مَعَهُ حَيْثُ يَذْكُرُنِي وَاللَّهِ لَلَّهُ أَفْرَحُ بِتَوْبَةِ
عَبْدِهِ مِنْ أَحَدِكُمْ يَجِدُ ضَالَّتَهُ بِالْفَلَاةِ وَمَنْ تَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ شِبْرًا تَقَرَّبْتُ إِلَيْهِ ذِرَاعًا وَمَنْ
تَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ ذِرَاعًا تَقَرَّبْتُ إِلَيْهِ بَاعًا وَإِذَا أَقْبَلَ إِلَيَّ يَمْشِي أَقْبَلْتُ إِلَيْهِ أُهَرْوِلُ

"Allah has said, 'I am as My servant expects of Me. I am with him wherever he remembers me.' By Allah, Allah has more joy due to the repentance of His servant than one of you has when he finds his lost provisions in an open land. [Allah also has said,] 'Whoever comes close to Me by the span of a hand, I come closer to him by a cubit. And whoever comes closer to me by a cubit, I come closer to him by an arm's length. And if he walks toward Me, I rush toward him." (Recorded by Muslim.)

Especially at the time of approaching one's death, one should have good expectations of Allah. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said just three days before his own death,

لَا يَمُوتَنَّ أَحَدُكُمْ إِلَّا وَهُوَ يُحْسِنُ بِاللَّهِ الظَّنَّ

"None of you should die except while he is having good expectations of Allah." (Recorded by Muslim.)

To despair of Allah's mercy and forgiveness and not to have any hope in Him is, in fact, one of the great sins. Allah says in the Quran, quoting Jacob,

إِنَّهُۥ لَا يَاْيْـَٔسُ مِن رَّوْحِ ٱللَّهِ إِلَّا ٱلْقَوْمُ ٱلْكَـٰفِرُونَ

"Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people" (*Yoosuf* 87).

Who Has the Right to Put His Hope in Allah and Have Good Expectations of Him?

Allah says in the Quran,

إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَٱلَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا۟ وَجَـٰهَدُوا۟ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ أُو۟لَـٰٓئِكَ يَرْجُونَ
رَحْمَتَ ٱللَّهِ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

"Indeed, those who have believed and those who have emigrated and fought in the cause of Allah, they expect the mercy of Allah. And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful" (*al-Baqara* 218). In this verse, Allah implies that those who truly have the right to have hope in Allah's mercy are those who believe, migrate and strive in the way of Allah. When a believer does those things, he will surely find Allah forgiving and merciful. When one does his best to obey Allah, he certainly has the right— by Allah’s mercy— to expect that Allah will be forgiving and merciful to him.

Ibn Uthaimeen wrote,

> When should the servant have good expectations of Allah? That would be when the servant has done what obligates Allah’s grace and mercy, [for example,] when he performs good deeds and has positive expectations that Allah will accept them from him. However, to have good expectations while not working, this is a type of dreaming or wishing with respect to Allah. The one who follows his one desires and then has dreams or wishes concerning Allah is the one who will not be able [to have his dreams fulfilled].[1]

Similarly, ibn Hajr stated that the one who sins and disobeys Allah and then believes that he will not be held accountable for it is one who is deceived.[2]

The Proper Balance Between Hope and Fear

Allah says in the Quran,

ٱعۡلَمُوٓاْ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ شَدِيدُ ٱلۡعِقَابِ وَأَنَّ ٱللَّهَ غَفُورٞ رَّحِيمٞ ۝ مَّا عَلَى
ٱلرَّسُولِ إِلَّا ٱلۡبَلَٰغُۗ وَٱللَّهُ يَعۡلَمُ مَا تُبۡدُونَ وَمَا تَكۡتُمُونَ

“Know that Allah is severe in punishment and that Allah is forgiving and merciful. The Messenger is only to convey. And Allah knows whatever you reveal and whatever you conceal” (*al-Maaidah* 98-99).

In a very frank and eye-opening hadith, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) once said,

لَوْ يَعْلَمُ الْمُؤْمِنُ مَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ مِنَ الْعُقُوبَةِ مَا طَمِعَ بِجَنَّتِهِ أَحَدٌ وَلَوْ يَعْلَمُ الْكَافِرُ مَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ مَا قَنَطَ مِنْ جَنَّتِهِ أَحَدٌ

“If the believer knew what Allah has with Him of punishment, no one would ever hope to achieve His paradise. And if a disbeliever knew what Allah has with Him of mercy, no one would ever despair of achieving His paradise.” (Recorded by Muslim.)

In another statement, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) also said,

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[1] Ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 5, p. 389.

[2] Quoted in Sultaan, p. 361.

الْجَنَّةُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَى أَحَدِكُمْ مِنْ شِرَاكِ نَعْلِهِ وَالنَّارُ مِثْلُ ذَلِكَ

"Paradise is closer to one of you than his own shoelace. And the Fire is also like that." (Recorded by al-Bukhari.)

A believer must have both hope in and fear of Allah. All humans sin. Without a feeling of hope in Allah's mercy, one is apt to feel doomed to punishment— regardless of future works— and fall into despair. On the other hand, without any fear of Allah, one begins to feel immune from punishment regardless of his deeds. Hence, he becomes almost indifferent to performing an obligatory deed or performing a sin. One must, therefore, have both fear of Allah's punishment and hope of His mercy and forgiveness.

However, the proper balance between hope and fear is something that the scholars have differed about over the years. Ibn Uthaimeen presents the following views on this question:

Some say that the aspect of hope should always be greater than the aspect of fear.

Others say that the aspect of fear should always be greater than the aspect of hope.

Others say that the aspects of fear and hope should be equally strong in the person's heart. If either of them dominates, the result is negative, as described above.

Others say that when one is healthy, the two should be equally strong. However, when one is ill or close to death, the feeling of hope should dominate the feeling of fear. This is the view al-Nawawi supports in *Riyaadh al-Saaliheen*.[1]

Others say that while one is performing an act of obedience to Allah, he should be in a state of hope that Allah will accept that deed from him. But if he is about to perform a sin, the feeling of fear should overcome him such that it keeps him from performing that act.

Ibn Uthaimeen's own conclusion seems to be a sound one. He says that the person himself must be his own "physician". If he sees that he is beginning to feel safe from the punishment of Allah or that he is committing sins or falling into wishful thinking, he should correct himself. He corrects himself by developing within himself the fear of Allah. If, on the other hand, he finds himself becoming overly fearful or starting to despair of the mercy of Allah, then he must change his ways by increasing his hope in Allah.[2]

Hence, there must be a balance between the two. The balance does not mean that the two are exactly equally strong in the heart at all times. But the balance does mean that the presence of each is strong enough to keep the believer from going to either extreme of not fearing Allah's punishment or despairing of Allah's forgiveness and mercy.

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[1] Al-Bugha and Mistu (p. 366-367) attribute this view to the Shafi'ees. But they add that when one looks to his own shortcomings, he should feel fear; when one looks to Allah's greatness, he should feel hope; as for the sick, hope should outweigh fear.

[2] Ibn Uthaimeen, *Sharh Riyaadh*, vol. 5, pp. 392-393.

"I have forgiven you for what you have done and I do not mind. [1]"

Allah says in the Quran,

قُلْ يَـٰعِبَادِىَ ٱلَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا۟ عَلَىٰٓ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا۟ مِن رَّحْمَةِ ٱللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ
يَغْفِرُ ٱلذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا ۚ إِنَّهُۥ هُوَ ٱلْغَفُورُ ٱلرَّحِيمُ

"Say: O My servants who have transgressed against their own souls, despair not of the mercy of Allah. Verily, Allah forgives all sins. Truly, He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful" (*al-Zumar* 53).

This forgiveness is the result of the person's supplicating to Allah and maintaining hope in Allah. Both of these are acts of worship. The result of these acts is Allah's willingness to forgive the servant for the sin that he has committed.

"if your sins were to reach the clouds"

No matter how great or how many one's sins, they can never be greater than the potential forgiveness and mercy of the Compassionate, the Merciful, the Forgiving, the Oft-Relenting.

Ibn Rajab quotes the lines of a poet who said,

"O Lord, even if the number of sins becomes great
I certainly know that Your forgiveness is greater
If only the doers of good can put their hope in You
To whom [else] could the sinner supplicate and put his hope
I have no means of approach to You except hope
and Your beautiful forgiveness and then the fact that I am a Muslim."[2]

"then you would seek My forgiveness, I would forgive you."

The word for seeking forgiveness, *al-istighfaar* (الاستغفار) is derived from the word *ghafara*. This root implies the clothing that one wears to protect oneself from dirt, filth[3] or harm.[4] So, for example, a warrior wears a *mighfar* on his head (like a heavy helmet) in order to protect himself from the harm of spears, swords and so forth.

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[1] According to al-Teebi, what is meant by the last part of that phrase is, "He is not asked about what He does," instead of, "and I do not mind." Allah knows best. (Al-Teebi is quoted in al-Mubaarakfoori, *Tuhfah*, vol. 9, p. 525.)

[2] Quoted in ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 407.

[3] Cf., Sultaan, p. 364.

[4] Cf., ibn Muhammad, p. 229.

"Forgiveness" means that Allah covers one's faults, removes one's sins[1] and does not punish the person in the Hereafter. One of the most important things that a person can ask of Allah— after asking to be guided to the truth— is to ask forgiveness for one's sins and related matters, such as being rescued from the Fire and being entered into Paradise. This is what the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself said that his supplications were all about.[2]

When one sins and then sincerely turns to Allah seeking His forgiveness, one will find Allah ready to accept his repentance and to forgive him. Allah says,

وَمَن يَعۡمَلۡ سُوٓءًا أَوۡ يَظۡلِمۡ نَفۡسَهُۥ ثُمَّ يَسۡتَغۡفِرِ ٱللَّهَ يَجِدِ ٱللَّهَ غَفُورٗا رَّحِيمٗا

"And whoever does a wrong or wrongs himself but then seeks forgiveness from Allah, he will find Allah forgiving and merciful" (*al-Nisaa* 110).

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) stated in a hadith,

أَذْنَبَ عَبْدٌ ذَنْبًا فَقَالَ اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي ذَنْبِي فَقَالَ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى أَذْنَبَ عَبْدِي ذَنْبًا فَعَلِمَ أَنَّ
لَهُ رَبًّا يَغْفِرُ الذَّنْبَ وَيَأْخُذُ بِالذَّنْبِ ثُمَّ عَادَ فَأَذْنَبَ فَقَالَ أَيْ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي ذَنْبِي فَقَالَ
تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى عَبْدِي أَذْنَبَ ذَنْبًا فَعَلِمَ أَنَّ لَهُ رَبًّا يَغْفِرُ الذَّنْبَ وَيَأْخُذُ بِالذَّنْبِ ثُمَّ عَادَ
فَأَذْنَبَ فَقَالَ أَيْ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي ذَنْبِي فَقَالَ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى أَذْنَبَ عَبْدِي ذَنْبًا فَعَلِمَ أَنَّ لَهُ
رَبًّا يَغْفِرُ الذَّنْبَ وَيَأْخُذُ بِالذَّنْبِ اعْمَلْ مَا شِئْتَ فَقَدْ غَفَرْتُ لَكَ

"A slave committed a sin and said, 'O Lord, I have committed a sin, so forgive me.' The Lord said, 'My slave knows he has a Lord who forgives sins. Therefore, I have forgiven my slave.' Then he committed another sin and said, 'O Lord, I have committed another sin, so forgive me!' His Lord says, 'My slave knows he has a Lord who forgives sins, therefore, I have forgiven him.' And on the third or fourth occurrence Allah says, 'He may do whatever he wishes.'" (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

As mentioned in the commentary to Hadith #18, the meaning of that hadith is that as long as the person is in that state, Allah will forgive him. If every time he commits a sin he feels remorse and turns to Allah to forgive him, without having the intention to continue performing that sin, Allah, the

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[1] Al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 356.

[2] Recorded by Abu Dawood and others. According to al-Hilaali, it is *sahih*. See al-Hilaali, *Eeqaadh*, p. 410.

Exalted, will be willing to forgive him.[1] Such is the great forgiveness of Allah and His pleasure with His servants when they seek His forgiveness.

Seeking Allah's Forgiveness and Repenting to Allah

Everyone commits sins and does wrong. However, Allah is always allowing for the chance to repent and seek Allah's forgiveness. In fact, Allah has said in the Quran,

وَلَوْ يُؤَاخِذُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلنَّاسَ بِمَا كَسَبُوا۟ مَا تَرَكَ عَلَىٰ ظَهْرِهَا مِن دَآبَّةٍ وَلَـٰكِن
يُؤَخِّرُهُمْ إِلَىٰٓ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۖ فَإِذَا جَآءَ أَجَلُهُمْ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ كَانَ بِعِبَادِهِۦ
بَصِيرًۢا

"And if Allah were to punish men for what they have earned, He would not leave upon it [the Earth] any creature. But He defers them to a specified term. And when their time comes, then, indeed Allah has ever been ever watching of His servants" (*Faatir* 45; *al-Nahl* 61 also has a similar meaning).

The fact that Allah is willing to forgive sins is something that a believer should never forget. This is a great act of mercy and grace on the part of Allah. Had Allah willed, He could have held everyone immediately accountable for every sin he commits. However, He has decreed that He shall allow His servants to seek His forgiveness and that He shall in fact forgive as He wills.

Most humans not only sin but they commit sins on a regular basis. Therefore, they must continually seek Allah's forgiveness. On this point, the Prophet (peace be upon him), although his previous and future sins were forgiven and he certainly did not sin like other humans, set an excellent example for all people to come. He stated of himself,

وَاللَّهِ إِنِّي لأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ فِي الْيَوْمِ أَكْثَرَ مِنْ سَبْعِينَ مَرَّةً

"By Allah, I certainly ask Allah for forgiveness and repent to him more than seventy times a day." (Recorded by al-Bukhari.) Abu Huraira stated that he had never seen anyone asking Allah for forgiveness more than the Prophet (peace be upon him).

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[1] Al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 362. They also point out that if a person says, "O Allah forgive me," with his tongue while his heart is yet intending to commit the sin, it is just words of supplication. Allah may respond positively or He may refuse such an invocation. However, later (p. 363) they state that if a person says, "O Allah forgive me and I repent to You," while his heart is intent on performing the sin, then he is lying and he is committing a sin because, in fact, he has not repented. It is not allowed for him to state about himself that he is repentant while he is not so. Under such circumstances, it would be better for him to say, "O Allah, I seek your forgiveness, so relent to Me." Ibn Rajab (*Jaami*, vol. 2, pp. 409-412) and al-Haitami (*Fath*, p. 285) have very similar discussions.

In the Quran, Allah has ordered the believers to seek His forgiveness. This order makes it obligatory upon the believers to seek Allah's forgiveness. Allah says,

وَٱسْتَغْفِرُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ ۖ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌۢ

"And seek Allah's forgiveness. Certainly, Allah is forgiving, merciful" (*al-Muzzammil* 20). Allah also says,

أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوٓا۟ إِلَّا ٱللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّنِى لَكُم مِّنْهُ نَذِيرٌ وَبَشِيرٌ ﴿٢﴾ وَأَنِ ٱسْتَغْفِرُوا۟ رَبَّكُمْ
ثُمَّ تُوبُوٓا۟ إِلَيْهِ

"[The messenger says], 'Do not worship except Allah. Indeed, I am sent) to you from Him as a [person who] warns and [one who] brings glad tidings. And seek forgiveness from your Lord and repent to Him" (*Hood* 2-3).

In the Quran, Allah also commends those who seek His forgiveness. For example, He says,

قُلْ أَؤُنَبِّئُكُم بِخَيْرٍ مِّن ذَٰلِكُمْ ۚ لِلَّذِينَ ٱتَّقَوْا۟ عِندَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّٰتٌ تَجْرِى مِن
تَحْتِهَا ٱلْأَنْهَٰرُ خَٰلِدِينَ فِيهَا وَأَزْوَٰجٌ مُّطَهَّرَةٌ وَرِضْوَٰنٌ مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ
بَصِيرٌۢ بِٱلْعِبَادِ ﴿١٥﴾ ٱلَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَآ إِنَّنَآ ءَامَنَّا فَٱغْفِرْ لَنَا
ذُنُوبَنَا وَقِنَا عَذَابَ ٱلنَّارِ ﴿١٦﴾ ٱلصَّٰبِرِينَ وَٱلصَّٰدِقِينَ وَٱلْقَٰنِتِينَ
وَٱلْمُنفِقِينَ وَٱلْمُسْتَغْفِرِينَ بِٱلْأَسْحَارِ

"Say: Shall I not inform you of things far better than those [things of this world]? For the pious there are gardens with their Lord, wherein rivers flow. Therein [is their] eternal home and [for them are] pure spouses. And Allah will be pleased with them. And Allah is All-Seer of the slaves. Those who say, 'Our Lord! We have indeed believed, so forgive us our sins and save us from the punishment of the Fire.' They are those who are patient, those who are true, and obedient with sincere devotion in worship to Allah. Those who spend [in charity] and those who pray and beg for Allah's forgiveness in the also hours of the night" (*ali-Imraan* 15-17).

Allah also says,

وَٱلَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا۟ فَٰحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوٓا۟ أَنفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ فَٱسْتَغْفَرُوا۟
لِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَمَن يَغْفِرُ ٱلذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا ٱللَّهُ وَلَمْ يُصِرُّوا۟ عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلُوا۟ وَهُمْ
يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٣٥﴾ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ جَزَآؤُهُم مَّغْفِرَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَجَنَّٰتٌ تَجْرِى مِن
تَحْتِهَا ٱلْأَنْهَٰرُ خَٰلِدِينَ فِيهَا ۚ وَنِعْمَ أَجْرُ ٱلْعَٰمِلِينَ

“And those who, when they have committed illicit acts or wronged themselves with evil, remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their sins— and who can forgive sins except Allah? And they do not persist in what [wrong] they were doing while they know it. For such, the reward is forgiveness from their Lord and gardens with rivers flowing through, wherein they shall abide forever. How excellent is this reward for the doers [of good]” (*ali-Imraan* 135-136).

Is Seeking Forgiveness Sufficient or Must One Also Repent?

Many times seeking Allah’s forgiveness is mentioned along with repentance. For example, Allah says,

أَفَلَا يَتُوبُونَ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَهُۥ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

“Will they not repent to Allah and ask His forgiveness? For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful” (*al-Maaidah* 74). However, in the hadith under discussion, this particular hadith, there is only mention of seeking Allah’s forgiveness and the result is that the act is forgiven.

According to some of the commentators on this hadith, the mention of forgiveness here implies its being accompanied by repentance. Al-Nawawi, for example, explicitly states this in his commentary to this hadith.[1] Al-Haitami also seems to support this interpretation.[2]

According to ibn Rajab, when seeking forgiveness and repentance are mentioned together, the two have different implications. Seeking forgiveness implies the verbal act of requesting forgiveness while repentance implies both removing oneself from the sin with both the heart and body and the feeling of remorse. According to Ibn Rajab, some say that when seeking forgiveness is mentioned by itself (without mention of repentance), it implies both forgiveness and repentance. Others, however, say it implies asking forgiveness without continually making the sin, as in that case Allah forgives the sins even though the other conditions of repentance have not been met.[1] The last view is based on an understanding of the verse of the Quran quoted above,

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[1] See al-Nawawi, *Sharh al-Arbaeen* (Ridha), p. 93.

[2] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 285.

وَٱلَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُواْ فَٰحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوٓاْ أَنفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُواْ ٱللَّهَ فَٱسْتَغْفَرُواْ
لِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَمَن يَغْفِرُ ٱلذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا ٱللَّهُ وَلَمْ يُصِرُّواْ عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلُواْ وَهُمْ
يَعْلَمُونَ

"And those who, when they have committed illicit acts or wronged themselves with evil, remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their sins— and who can forgive sins except Allah? And they do not persist in what [wrong] they were doing while they know it" (*ali-Imraan* 135).

The Conditions for Repentance

In conclusion, this hadith which refers to seeking forgiveness either implies seeking the forgiveness while repenting or only seeking forgiveness while discontinuing the wrong deed. It seems that the first view, wherein repentance is also implied, is the most popular with many scholars.

In his monumental work on the terminology of the Quran, al-Isfahaani pointed out that repentance is not simply a matter of stopping one's sins but is also to refrain, in the most beautiful manner, from sinning and to amend for one's deeds in the best way possible.[2]

So, in order to repent properly, it is important to realize the conditions for a sound repentance. (These conditions were given earlier, but due to their importance they shall be reiterated here in a slightly different manner.) They are:

(1) The repentance must be sincerely and solely for the sake of Allah and to please Him.

(2) The repentant person must feel remorse for the sin he committed and should wish that he had never done that act.

(3) The person must immediately stop performing the wrong act that he was doing. If the act was an obligatory act that he failed to perform, he must perform it immediately. If the wrong he did violated the rights of any other person, he must fulfill that person's right, seek his forgiveness and settle the matter with the other person.

Concerning the rights of others, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) stated,

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[1] Ibn Rajab, *Jaami*, vol. 2, pp. 407-408. Cf., al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 285; al-Bugha and Mistu, pp. 361-362.

[2] Al-Raaghib al-Isfahaani, *Mufradaat Alfaadh al-Quran* (Damascus: Dar al-Qalam, 1997), p. 169.

مَنْ كَانَتْ لَهُ مَظْلَمَةٌ لأَخِيهِ مِنْ عِرْضِهِ أَوْ شَيْءٍ فَلْيَتَحَلَّلْهُ مِنْهُ الْيَوْمَ قَبْلَ أَنْ لا يَكُونَ
دِينَارٌ وَلا دِرْهَمٌ إِنْ كَانَ لَهُ عَمَلٌ صَالِحٌ أُخِذَ مِنْهُ بِقَدْرِ مَظْلَمَتِهِ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ حَسَنَاتٌ
أُخِذَ مِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ صَاحِبِهِ فَحُمِلَ عَلَيْهِ

“Whoever has wronged another person concerning his honor or anything else should beg him for forgiveness now before there comes a time when there will be neither dinars or dirhams. [Otherwise,] if he has good deeds, they will be taken from him according to the amount of wrong that he did. If he does not have any good deeds, some of the evil deeds of his companion will be taken and loaded upon him.” (Recorded by al-Bukhari.)

(4) The person must be of resolute intention not to perform that sin again in the future.

(5) The act of repentance must be done before it is “too late” for the person, such as when his time of death has come or when the sun rises from the West as a sign of the Day of Judgment. Allah says in the Quran,

وَلَيْسَتِ ٱلتَّوْبَةُ لِلَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ ٱلسَّيِّـَٔاتِ حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَهُمُ ٱلْمَوْتُ
قَالَ إِنِّى تُبْتُ ٱلْـَٔـٰنَ وَلَا ٱلَّذِينَ يَمُوتُونَ وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ ۚ أُو۟لَـٰٓئِكَ أَعْتَدْنَا
لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا

“And of no effect is the repentance of those who continue to do evil deeds until death faces one of them and he says, ‘Now I repent,’ nor of those who die while they are disbelievers. For them We have prepared a painful torment” (*al-Nisaa* 18).[1]

“if you were to come to Me with... and you would then meet Me without ascribing any partners with Me...”

This portion of the hadith implies that forgiveness will only come to those who meet Allah (die) while adhering to *tauheed*. The key to forgiveness has been given: adhering to *tauheed* and avoiding any form of *shirk*. Whoever is missing this key will not achieve Allah’s forgiveness. Allah says in the Quran,

إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَن يُشْرَكَ بِهِۦ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَٰلِكَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ ۚ وَمَن يُشْرِكْ
بِٱللَّهِ فَقَدِ ٱفْتَرَىٰٓ إِثْمًا عَظِيمًا

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[1] Cf., ibn Muhammad, p. 229; Sultaan, pp. 366-368.

"Verily, Allah forgives not that partners should be set up with him in worship, but He forgives whatever is less than that for whomever He wills. And whoever sets up partners with Allah has indeed invented a tremendous sin" (*al-Nisaa* 48).

In another passage, Allah has stated virtually the same thing:

إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَن يُشْرَكَ بِهِۦ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَٰلِكَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ ۚ وَمَن يُشْرِكْ
بِٱللَّهِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَٰلًۢا بَعِيدًا

"Verily, Allah forgives not the setting up of partners with Him, but He forgives whom He pleases whatever is less than that. And whoever sets up partners with Allah has indeed strayed far away" (*al-Nisaa* 116).

Only due to the light of *tauheed* do sins melt away. If one fulfills all of the obligations of *tauheed*[1], they will overcome all of his sins and in the Hereafter he will be entered into Paradise without any punishment whatsoever.

But even if a person has some shortcoming in fulfilling the obligations of *tauheed* and comes to Allah with virtually the earth full of sins, the effect of *tauheed* is so great that all of those sins may be forgiven by Allah. Due to adherence to *tauheed* and avoidance of *shirk*, Allah may forgive person or He may punish him for some time in the Hereafter, thereby removing those sins from him, and then enter him into Paradise. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

يَخْرُجُ مِنَ النَّارِ مَنْ قَالَ لا إِلَهَ إِلاَّ اللَّهُ وَفِي قَلْبِهِ وَزْنُ شَعِيرَةٍ مِنْ خَيْرٍ وَيَخْرُجُ مِنَ النَّارِ
مَنْ قَالَ لا إِلَهَ إِلاَّ اللَّهُ وَفِي قَلْبِهِ وَزْنُ بُرَّةٍ مِنْ خَيْرٍ وَيَخْرُجُ مِنَ النَّارِ مَنْ قَالَ لا إِلَهَ إِلاَّ
اللَّهُ وَفِي قَلْبِهِ وَزْنُ ذَرَّةٍ مِنْ خَيْرٍ

"Whoever says, 'There is none worthy of worship except Allah,' and his heart contains a grain of barley's weight of good shall exit from the Fire. Whoever says, 'There is none worthy of worship except Allah,' and his heart contains a grain of wheat's weight of good shall exit from the Fire. Whoever says, 'There is none worthy of worship except Allah,' and his heart contains a mustard seed's weight of good shall exit from the Fire." (Recorded by al-Bukhari.)

However, if a person has *shirk*, then none of those sins will be forgiven and in the Hereafter he will be in the Hell-fire forever, as the verses quoted above clearly indicate. All the worldly deeds of those who associated partners with Allah will be worthless because none of them can be considered truly for the sake of Allah since such people never accepted the true faith or belief in

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[1] The obligations of *tauheed* were discussed in detail in the commentary to Hadith #2.

Allah. Allah describes what will be done in the Hereafter to their deeds in the following words:

وَقَدِمْنَآ إِلَىٰ مَا عَمِلُوا۟ مِنْ عَمَلٍ فَجَعَلْنَٰهُ هَبَآءً مَّنثُورًا

"And We will approach what they have done of deeds and make them as scattered dust" (*al-Furqaan* 23).

Other Points Related to This Hadith

- The forgiveness and clemency of Allah are greater and more expansive than the sins believers commit.
- No one should ever feel despair for any sin he has committed— even the sin of *shirk* (ascribing partners to Allah) for years of one's life is removed by the embracing of Islam and repentance. So, the door to repentance is always open until the time of one's death. However, the repentance must be true and sincere.
- The believer should always be repentant and seeking Allah's forgiveness as he recognizes that his sins and mistakes toward Allah are great and numerous.
- One of the best ways to ask forgiveness from Allah is by saying the supplication termed, "the leader of the words of supplication." The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated,

سَيِّدُ الاِسْتِغْفَارِ أَنْ تَقُولَ اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ رَبِّي لا إِلَهَ إِلاَّ أَنْتَ خَلَقْتَنِي وَأَنَا عَبْدُكَ وَأَنَا عَلَى عَهْدِكَ وَوَعْدِكَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا صَنَعْتُ أَبُوءُ لَكَ بِنِعْمَتِكَ عَلَيَّ وَأَبُوءُ لَكَ بِذَنْبِي فَاغْفِرْ لِي فَإِنَّهُ لا يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ إِلاَّ أَنْتَ قَالَ وَمَنْ قَالَهَا مِنَ النَّهَارِ مُوقِنًا بِهَا فَمَاتَ مِنْ يَوْمِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يُمْسِيَ فَهُوَ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ وَمَنْ قَالَهَا مِنَ اللَّيْلِ وَهُوَ مُوقِنٌ بِهَا فَمَاتَ قَبْلَ أَنْ يُصْبِحَ فَهُوَ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ

"The best statement of forgiveness is for one to say: 'O Allah, You are my Lord, there is no God but You. You created me and I am Your slave. I am following your covenant and promise to the best of my ability. I seek refuge in You from the evil that I have done. I profess to You your bounties upon me. And I confess to You my sins. Forgive me, for no one forgives sins except You.' Whoever says this with certainty concerning it during the daytime and dies that day before evening is one of the inhabitants of Paradise. And whoever says this with certainty concerning it during the nighttime and dies before morning, he is among the people of Paradise." (Recorded by al-Bukhari.)

- The one who seeks forgiveness from Allah realizes that he is turning to and seeking shelter from the one who is forgiving, merciful, self-sufficient, generous and all-knowing. When he confesses his sins to his Lord— and only to his Lord— and sincerely repents, his heart should become tranquil and his soul should come to a rest. His worry and concern should leave him as he hopes for the glad tidings of the mercy of Allah. He becomes now one hoping for the best and has no reason to despair.[1]
- It is part of the great mercy of Allah that someone may ask for something of this world yet Allah does not give it to him and, instead, He gives him something better than that. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

  مَا مِنْ مُسْلِمٍ يَدْعُو بِدَعْوَةٍ لَيْسَ فِيهَا إِثْمٌ وَلا قَطِيعَةُ رَحِمٍ إِلاَّ أَعْطَاهُ اللَّهُ بِهَا إِحْدَى ثَلاثٍ إِمَّا أَنْ تُعَجَّلَ لَهُ دَعْوَتُهُ وَإِمَّا أَنْ يَدَّخِرَهَا لَهُ فِي الآخِرَةِ وَإِمَّا أَنْ يَصْرِفَ عَنْهُ مِنَ السُّوءِ مِثْلَهَا قَالُوا إِذًا نُكْثِرُ قَالَ اللَّهُ أَكْثَرُ

  "No Muslim supplicates a supplication that does not contain any sin or cutting off of relations except that Allah grants him one of three things: Either Allah will immediately respond to his supplication, He will store for him something in the Hereafter or He will turn away from him an equivalent amount of evil." They said, "What if we request a lot?" He replied, "Then Allah shall give even more."[2]
- Al-Nawawi states that there are different kinds of "seeking forgiveness". One type is where the person asks Allah to forgive and remove any negative effect of his sins. This is the seeking forgiveness of sinners. Others seek forgiveness due to some shortcoming in their manner of thanking Allah. This is the seeking forgiveness done by the righteous and pious. Finally, there are those who seek forgiveness as a means of giving thanks to Allah. This is the type of seeking of forgiveness that was performed by the Prophet (peace be upon him).[3]
- Another hadith states,

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[1] Al-Bugha and Mistu, p. 364.

[2] Recorded by Ahmad. According to al-Hilaali, it is *sahih* due to its supporting evidences. See al-Hilaali, *Eeqaadh*, p. 557.

[3] Al-Nawawi, *Sharh al-Arbaeen* (Ridha), p. 94. The way al-Nawawi stated it may be considered a bit exaggerated. Even the pious and righteous commit sins. What he should have said is that the pious do not commit that many sins but ask forgiveness of Allah more often due to their sins and due to their recognizing that they do not thank Allah in the complete manner that He is deserving.

يَنْزِلُ رَبُّنَا تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى كُلَّ لَيْلَةٍ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا حِينَ يَبْقَى ثُلُثُ اللَّيْلِ الآخِرُ يَقُولُ
مَنْ يَدْعُونِي فَأَسْتَجِيبَ لَهُ مَنْ يَسْأَلُنِي فَأُعْطِيَهُ مَنْ يَسْتَغْفِرُنِي فَأَغْفِرَ لَهُ

“Our Lord, blessed and most high, descends during each night to the lowest heaven when only one-third of the last part of the night is left. He says, ‘Who is invoking Me so that I shall respond to him. Who is asking of Me so that I shall give him. And who is seeking My forgiveness so that I shall forgive him.’” (Recorded by al-Bukhari.) In his commentary to *Sahih al-Bukhari*, ibn Hajr explains the difference between invoking (*dua*), asking (*su`al*) and seeking forgiveness (*istighfaar*). One either asks for something good or the prevention of some harm, with respect either to this life or to the Hereafter. Seeking forgiveness is virtually concerned with avoiding some harm in the Hereafter. Asking is, for the most part, concerned with asking for some good in this life. And invoking encompasses seeking the good in both this life and the Hereafter.[1] Another hadith, found in *Sunan Abu Dawood*, demonstrates the proper way that the different types of requests are to be performed. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

الْمَسْأَلَةُ أَنْ تَرْفَعَ يَدَيْكَ حَذْوَ مَنْكِبَيْكَ أَوْ نَحْوَهُمَا وَالاِسْتِغْفَارُ أَنْ تُشِيرَ بِأُصْبُعٍ وَاحِدَةٍ
وَالاِبْتِهَالُ أَنْ تَمُدَّ يَدَيْكَ جَمِيعًا

“The asking is by raising your hands up to the height of your shoulders or somewhere close to it. The seeking of forgiveness is by pointing with one finger. And when making an earnest, strong supplication, you should stretch out both of your hands.”[2]

- Obviously, al-Nawawi has included forty-two hadith in his “Forty Hadith.” The only one this author could find who offered any kind of explanation for this fact was al-Haitami.[3] He stated that al-Nawawi added these two hadith, which was an addition of goodness, because these two hadith were very wonderful and amazing to al-Nawawi. Therefore, he thought it would be good to finish the work with them. The first additional hadith, Hadith #41, is an admonition and exhortation to go against one’s desires and to follow the *shareeah*. This, in fact, combines together all that are found in the other forty hadith as well as all that is found in the books on the Sunnah— in fact, al-Haitami adds, it combines together all that is found in the Quran itself. The second additional hadith, Hadith #42, is an exhortation and encouragement to pray to Allah, have hope in Him, seek forgiveness for one's sins and expect Allah's mercy.[1] The following should be added to what al-Haitami stated about Hadith #42: Since there will almost always be shortcomings when it comes to fulfilling Hadith #41 and all that the Quran and sunnah encompass, one must then rely upon Allah's mercy and plead to Him for forgiveness. Allah knows best.

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[1] Ibn Hajr, *Fath* (al-Maktabah al-Tijaariyyah), vol. 3, p. 341.
[2] According to al-Albaani, this hadith is *sahih.* See al-Albaani, *Saheeh al-Jaami*, vol. 2, p. 1135.
[3] Al-Haitami does not trace his comments to any source going back to al-Nawawi. Hence, it must be considered supposition on his part.

Summary of the Hadith

- The means or "causes" of forgiveness are three: (1) Supplicating to Allah with hope in Him; (2) Asking Allah for forgiveness and repenting to Him; and (3) adhering to *tauheed* (Islamic monotheism).
- No matter how great or how many a believer's sins, Allah's forgiveness and mercy is greater and can encompass them all.
- The act of forgiving on Allah's part does not harm Allah in any way. Hence, one should earnestly seek His forgiveness and mercy.

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[1] Al-Haitami, *Fath*, p. 286.

Epilogue

One of the reviewers of this book (may Allah reward him) objected to some paragraphs stating that the writing had gone from an "academic discussion" to "emotional sermonizing". Actually, this book was meant to be "scholarly" in its approach, but it was not meant to be purely an "academic discussion". There is no point or benefit to a mere academic discussion unless such a discussion moves then to the heart and from the heart to the limbs and deeds. That, in fact, is the goal of this book. To move the heart of the reader to act in accordance with the beautiful guidance and message of Islam. If that goal has not been reached and what these pages contain remains as mere "knowledge" that one only talks about on a theoretical level, then this effort has certainly been at least partially in vain.

It is hoped that every reader will read these hadith and their detailed commentaries and ask himself questions like the following:

"Are the intentions behind my acts purely and solely for the sake of Allah, such that Allah will be pleased with them?"

"Am I really performing the pillars of Islam seriously and correctly such that the foundation of my religion is solid?"

"Am I meeting the obligations of *imaan* such that I deserve to be called a believer and entered into Paradise?"

"Have I been able to go beyond the mere minimum and reached the level of *ihsaan* where I worship Allah as if I see him…?"

"Am I staying away from any heresies and innovations in the religion, realizing full well that such acts will be rejected by Allah?"

"Am I doing my best to avoid the doubtful matters so that I may make my religion pure and innocent and remain far away from falling into the forbidden acts? Am I avoiding those things that make me doubt and follow those things that are clearly permissible, correct and free of any doubts in my mind?"

"Are my actions toward Allah, His messenger, His book and all other Muslims sincere and am I fulfilling all of my obligations toward them?"

"Do I do what is within my means to do of the deeds that the Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded? Am I doing my best to completely avoid what he has forbidden?"

"Am I making sure that everything that I eat and sustain myself with is pure and wholesome according to the *shareeah*?"

"Do I truly love for my brother what I love for myself? If not, can I truly consider myself a real believer?"

"Do I make sure that when I speak, I speak only good and beneficial words? Am I kind and generous to my neighbors? Do I fulfill the rights of my visitor upon me?"

"Do I, like a true believer should, keep myself from getting angry for the wrong reasons?"

"Do I do all my deeds in the best way possible, thus pleasing Allah in all of my actions, even when slaughtering an animal?"

"Do I understand what *taqwa* is and do I really have *taqwa*?"

"Do I try to remove my evil deeds by performing better deeds after them?"

"Do I behave toward others in the proper way, in the manners prescribed by this noble religion?"

"Do I really put my trust in Allah? Do I really leave all of my affairs in His hand? Am I truly mindful of Him such that He will be there for me when I am in greatest need of Him?"

"Do I honestly have the characteristic of *hayaa`*, such that it keeps me from doing what is forbidden?"

"Do I remember that every day I am actually either selling myself on Allah's behalf for Paradise or dragging myself into the Hell-fire?"

"Do I do my best to avoid all types of *dhulm*?"

"Do I perform that charity that is required upon everyone of my bones on every day?"

"Do I truly stick stubbornly to the way of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his Companions, as if biting onto them with my molar teeth?"

"Do I truly control my tongue?"

"When I see an evil, what is my feeling toward that evil? Do I have any desire to remove it or have I become so complacent that I do not mind seeing the acts that are displeasing to Allah all around me?"

"Do I truly respect and deal with my brothers and sisters in Islam the way that I am supposed to? If so, how could I be envious of them? How could I hate them? How could I cheat them? How could I lie to them? How could I wrong them? How could I violate their honor and backbite them or tell lies about them…?"

"Am I helping my brothers and sisters? Am I saving them from their calamities in this world so that Allah will save me from the greatest calamity in the Hereafter?"

"Do I ever wrongfully show enmity to any of Allah's devoted servants, thereby opening myself up to war from Allah and His displeasure?"

"Do I first and foremost get close to Allah by performing those acts that He has obligated upon me and that are most pleasing to Him? After that, do I get even closer to Him by the voluntary deeds such that He becomes my ears with which I hear…? Can I really claim that for myself?"

"Am I in this world like a stranger or I have become so engrossed in this world that I cannot even think of leaving it, even if it means to meet Allah and enter Paradise?"

"Do I realize my shortcomings and sins? Let me then turn to Allah and ask Him for forgiveness for all of those shortcomings related to my actions, as He is the forgiving, the merciful, and none can forgive sins but Him."

These are just some of the many questions that a Muslim should ask himself just based on these few hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him). When the person thinks about these matters and acts appropriately upon them, Allah willing, he can look forward to Allah's pleasure and Paradise in the hereafter.

Finally, al-Nawawi truly met his goal of collecting together some of the most fundamental sayings of the Prophet (peace be upon him) that span the religion as a whole. By the grace and mercy of Allah, through al-Nawawi's effort, people have turned to these hadith, memorized them, studied them and explained them in detail. May Allah reward al-Nawawi greatly and handsomely for his noble effort.

May the peace and blessings be upon the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) who conveyed the message and strove earnestly for the sake of Allah.

All praises and gratitude are for Allah, the One who sent the messengers, revealed the books and guided the Muslims to the straight path and guided this *Ummah* to the noble teachings found in the works of the scholars.

نسأل الله أن يرحمنا برحمته الخاصة والعامة وأن ينجينا من أهوال الحاقة والطامة

وأن يمن علينا بتوفيقه والهداية إلى طريقه ونتوسل إليه به وباسمه الأعظم

وبكل اسم هو له استأثر به في علم غيبه أو علمه لأحد من خلقه

أن يختم لنا بالحسنى وأن يوفقنا من القول والعمل لما يحبه ويرضاه

وأن يجعل خير أعمالنا خواتمها وخير أيامنا يوم لقاه وأن يقربنا

لديه ولا يخجلنا بين يديه إنه الجواد الكريم الرءوف الرحيم

والحمد لله الذي هدانا لهذا وما كنا لنهتدي لو لا أن

هدانا الله والصلاة والسلام على أشرف مخلوقاتك

محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم وعلى آله وصحبه

أجمعين وآخر دعونا أن الحمد لله

رب العالمين

آمين

Biographical Data[1]

Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-As [عبد الله بن عمرو بن العاص]- see p. 1576

Abdul Rahmaan ibn Mahdi [عبد الرحمن بن مهدي]: Abdul Rahmaan ibn Mahdi (120-198) was one of the greatest scholars and critics of hadith in his time. He is the one who wrote to al-Shafi'ee, requesting al-Shafi'ee to write about the principles of legal theory and the result was al-Shafi'ee's *al-Risaalah.* Al-Shafi'ee said about him, "I do not know of anyone similar to him [in knowledge] in this world."

Abdul Razzaaq al-Sanaani [عبد الرزاق الصنعاني]: Abdul Razaaq was born in the 126 A.H. His father was a scholar in his own right and narrated hadith from Ikrimah, Wahb ibn Munabbih and others. Abdul Razaaq was a great scholar of hadith. He was considered a trustworthy scholar although toward the end of his life, when he lost his eyesight, his narrations are not considered of excellent quality. He is probably most famous for his collection of hadith and reports from the Companions and Followers entitled *al-Musannaf.* His teachers included Sufyaan al-Thauri, Sufyaan ibn Uyainah, Mamar ibn Raashid and Imam Malik. His students included Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Yahya ibn Maeen, Ishaaq ibn Rahawaih and numerous others. Abdul Razaaq also compiled a *tafseer* of the Quran that has recently been published. His narrations were an important source for al-Tabari's *tafseer*.

Abu Bakr al-Siddeeq [أبو بكر الصديق] (573-13/634) was the closest friend of the Prophet (peace be on him) before and after Islam. He was the greatest of all the Companions and the first Caliph. He as the leader in suppressing the apostasy of the Arabs after the Prophet's death and reestablishing the rule of Islam over Arabia. He was the first to have the entire Quran collected and written down in one volume.

Abu Dawood al-Sijistaani [أبو داود السجستاني] - see p. 1083.

Abu al-Darda [أبو الدرداء]: Abu al-Darda Uwaimir ibn Maalik ibn Qays al-Ansaari (d. 32 A.H./652 C.E.) was a Companion of the Prophet from the Khazraj tribe of Madinah. He was also an ascetic and a warrior. He was appointed Judge over Damascus by Muawiyah at the order of the Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattaab. He was a scholar of the Quran and taught it in Syria where he died. He narrated 117 hadith.

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[1] Not all of the personalities mentioned in the text are presented here, only those who were most relied upon. The personalities discussed here are placed in alphabetical order of most recognized portions of their names; for alphabetization purposes, the *al* (ال) is ignored; the portion in bold is the portion written in Arabic. Most of the information presented here is well-established and of public record. Hence, individual referencing is not required. However, most of the information comes from al-Zirikli; ibn Katheer, *Bidaayah*; ibn Hajr, *Tahdheeb* and *al-Isaabah*; and al-Dhahabi, *Siyar*. In many cases, the introductions to the published editions of books quoted and mentioned in the Bibliography were used for dates of birth, death and other vital information. The dates after the person's name are the dates of his life or of his birth (b.) or death (d.). If two dates are given separated by a slash (/), the first date is the Hijri date while the second date is that of the Christian Era. If only one date is given, it is of the Hijri era, unless otherwise noted.

Abu Dharr Jundub ibn Junaadah [أبو ذر جندب بن جنادة] - see p. 696.

Abu Hanifah al-Numan ibn Thaabit [أبو حنيفة النعمان بن ثابت]: Abu Hanifah lived from 80 A.H. (699 C.E.) to 150 A.H. (767 C.E.). The Hanafi school of fiqh, the most widespread school of fiqh, is named after him. He was born and brought up in Kufah in a family that had come to Iraq from Afghanistan. He started his studies in philosophy and scholastic theology. After mastering those fields, he decided to give them up and concentrate on fiqh. Some of his most important students include Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Shaibaani and Abu Yoosuf.

Abu Huraira [أبو هريرة] - see pp. 521-522.

Abu Masood al-Badri [أبو مسعود البدري] - see pp. 810-811.

Abu Moosa al-Ashari [أبو موسى الأشعري]: Abu Moosa was an eminent Companion. He was born in Yemen in 602 C.E. He came to Makkah and embraced Islam. He took part in the battles of the Prophet (peace be upon him). The Prophet (peace be on him) appointed him the governor of Yemen. He was also appointed the governor of Basrah and Kufah by Umar and Uthmaan. He served on the tribunal appointed to decide the feud between Ali and Muawiyah. He died in Kufah in 44 A.H. (665 C.E.).

Abu Saeed al-Khudri [أبو سعيد الخدري] - see pp. 1137-1138.

Abu Shaamah [أبو شامة]: Abdul Rahmaan ibn Isma'il ibn Ibrahim, commonly known as Abu Shaamah (599/1202-665/1267) was a historian, a Shafi'ite jurist and a grammarian from Damascus. He is the author of *al-Rawdatain fi Akhbaar al-Dawlatain*, *al-Murshid al-Wajeez ila Uloom al-Kitaab al-Azeez*, *Ibraz al-Ma'ani fi Sharh al-Shatibiyah* and *al-Bida' wa al-Hawadith*.

Abu Taalib [أبو طالب]: Abu Taalib ibn Abd al-Muttalib ibn Haashim was an uncle of the Prophet who looked after him after his father and grandfather had died. Although he loved and protected the Prophet (peace be upon him), and even stated his admiration for the Prophet's faith, he refused to embrace Islam and died upon the religion of his forefathers.

Abu Thalaba al-Khushani [أبو ثعلبة الخشني] - see p. 1122.

Abu Yala al-Mausili [أبو يعلى الموصلي]: Abu Yala Ahmad ibn Ali al-Tameemi (d. 307/919) was a scholar of hadith who collected together a *Musnad*.

Abu Yazeed al-Bistaami [أبو يزيد البسطامي]: Abu Yazeed (188/804-261/875) was a very early Sufi, the son of a Zoroastrian who had converted to Islam. He was known for his piety. He is heavily quoted by later scholars although, like all other human beings, his statements, especially those made while "spiritually intoxicated," need to be judged in the light of the Quran and sunnah.

Abu Yoosuf [أبو يوسف]: Yaqoob ibn Ibraaheem ibn Habeeb al-Ansaari (113/731-182/798) was one of the leading students of Abu Hanifah, as well as a great scholar and independent jurist in his own right. He contributed greatly to the development of the Hanafi fiqh. He served as *Qaadi al-Qudaat* (Chief Judge) during the reigns of al-Mahdi, al-Haadi and Haroon al-Rasheed. He was born in Kufah and died in Baghdad.

Abu Zaid, Bakr [بكر أبو زيد]: Bakr Abu Zaid is a contemporary scholar living in Saudi Arabia. Highly respected for his knowledge, he specializes mostly in hadith and fiqh, discussing some of today's more difficult issues. He has also written extensively on ibn al-Qayyim. He is currently the president of the Majma al-Fiqh al-Islaami, a member of the Board of Leading Scholars and a member of the Committee for Scientific Research and *Fatwa*s in Saudi Arabia.

Al-Ahdab, Khaldoon [خلدون الأحدب]: Dr. Khaldoon al-Ahdab is currently a professor of Hadith and Hadith Sciences at King Abdul Aziz University in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. He has compiled and critically discussed the hadith found in al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadi's *Tareekh Baghdaad* that are not to be found in the standard six works. This work is entitled *Zawaaid Tareekh Baghdaad ala al-Kutub al-Sittah.*

Ahmad ibn Hanbal al-Shaibaani [أحمد بن حنبل الشيباني] - see p. 1039.

al-Aini [العيني]: Badr al-deen Muhammad al-'Ayni (d. 855/1451) was a scholar of Hanafi fiqh, hadith, tafseer, legal theory, history and grammar. He learned from scholars in Aleppo and Jerusalem. Later, he settled in Cairo, where he lectured, gave *fatawa* and served as Chief Judge (*qaadi al-qudat*). His writings include, among others, a voluminous commentary on the *Sahih* of al-Bukhari and a commentary on *Kanz al-Daqaa`iq* on Hanafi fiqh.

Aisha bint Abu Bakr al-Sideeq [عائشة بنت أبي بكر الصديق] - see p. 437.

al-Alaai, Salaah al-Deen [صلاح الدين العلائي]: Salaah al-Deen Khaleel ibn Kaikaldi (d. 761) was born in Damascus. He learned hadith from Jamaal al-Deen al-Mizzi and fiqh from Burhaan al-Deen al-Fazaari and al-Kamaal al-Zamlikaani. He became one of the leading Shafi'ee scholars of his time. He produced many works in hadith, fiqh and Arabic language. He wrote one of the most important works on *qawaaid fiqhiyah* from the Shafi'ee perspective.

al-Albaani, Muhammad Naasir al-Deen [محمد ناصر الدين الألباني]: Al-Albaani is a contemporary author, originally from Albania and currently residing in Jordan. He was born in the capital of Albania in 1914 C.E. He is regarded by many as the most outstanding scholar of hadith today. He has done a great deal to help revive the study of hadith. His most important works, in which he discusses the status of hadith in the greatest detail, are *Silsilat al-Ahaadeeth al-Saheehah* (his own collection of authentic hadith, which currently has six volumes to it), *Silsilat al-Ahaadeeth al-Dhaeefah* (his own collection of weak hadith, currently at five volumes) and *Irwaa al-Ghaleel fi Takhreej Ahadeeth Manaar al-Sabeel.*

Ali ibn Abu Taalib [علي بن أبي طالب]: Ali was one of the leading companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). He was one of the first people to embrace Islam, embracing Islam while still a youth. He participated in most of the battles of the Prophet (peace be upon him). He married the Prophet's daughter Faatimah and later became the fourth caliph of Islam. He was well known for his insight and knowledge of the religion. He died in Kufah in 40 A.H./660 C.E.

Ali ibn al-Madeeni [على بن المديني]: Ali ibn al-Madeeni (161-234) was one of the greatest scholars of hadith. He was especially expert in the hidden defects of hadith that scholars sometimes do not notice. His students included Imam al-Bukhari, who once said about Ali, "I never considered myself little in front of anyone except in front of Ali ibn al-Madeeni."

Alqamah ibn Qais al-Nakhai [علقمة بن قيس النخعي]: Alqamah was born during the lifetime of the Prophet (peace be upon him) but did not see the Prophet (peace be upon him). He narrated hadith from Umar, Uthman, Ali, ibn Masood and others. He was one of the most famous and best of ibn Masood's students. One early scholar stated, "If you have seen Alqamah, there is no harm for you in that you did not see Abdullah ibn Masood, for Alqamah was the closest in resembling him." Alqamah was considered a trustworthy narrator. He died in the year 61 or 62 A.H.

Al-Amash [الأعمش]: Al-Amash (61-148 A.H.) was one of the "minor Followers," having met only a few Companions. He met Anas ibn Malik and learned some hadith from him. His students included Abu Bakr ibn Ayyash, Wakee' and Sufyaan.

Al-Amidi [الآمدي]: Saif al-Deen Abu al-Hasan Ali al-Taghlibi al-Amidi was a jurist, legal theorist and theologian born in Amid in 551/1156. He went to Baghdad and from there to Syria and then to Cairo. He died in Damascus in 630/1233. His writings include *al-Ihkam fi Usul al-Ahkam* and *Muntaha al-Sul* concerning legal theory and *Ghayat al-Maram fi 'Ilm al-Kalam* in theology.

Ammaar ibn Yaasir [عمار بن ياسر]: Ammar ibn Yaasir al-Kanaani (d. 37/657) was one of the earliest Companions to embrace Islam. Both he and his parents suffered a great deal at the hands of the disbelieving Quraish. He built the first mosque in Islam at Quba, was appointed governor of Kufah by 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, joined the army of 'Ali and was killed at the battle of Siffin.

Anas ibn Maalik [أنس بن مالك] - see p. 599.

al-Arnaoot, Abdul Qaadir [عبد القادر الأرناؤوط]: Abdul Qaadir al-Arnaoot is a contemporary author whose family is from Bosnia. He is specialized in hadith. His most important work to date is a critical edition of ibn al-Atheer's *Jaami al-Usool fi al-Ahaadeeth al-Rasool*, in which he discusses the grades of all of the hadith in that work.

al-Arnaoot, Shuaib [شعيب الأرناؤوط]: Shuaib al-Aranoot is a contemporary author whose family moved from Albania to Damascus, where he was born in 1928 C.E. He is one of the leading authorities in hadith today. Among his most important works is a complete critical rendition of ibn Hibbaan's *Sahih.* He, with a team of scholars, is currently publishing a critical edition of Imam Ahmad's *Musnad*.

al-Ashari [الأشعري] Abu al-Hasan (260/873-324/935) was the founder of the Asharite school of theology. Early in his life, he was a student and follower of the famous Mutazilite theologian al-Jubbaa`i. However, at the age of forty he realized that the Mutazilite theology was in conflict with the Quran and sunnah. Therefore, he gave it up and developed a new theology. He found that his new theology was still somewhat influenced by his earlier thought and began to discard those ideas in favor of strict adherence to the texts of the Quran and sunnah, as followed by the early generations. In his last work, *al-Ibaanah*, he makes his position clear that he then adhered to the same path as that followed by Ahmad ibn Hanbal.

Al-Ashqar, Umar [عمر الأشقر]: Umar al-Ashqar is a contemporary author who spent many years teaching in Kuwait but who is now teaching in Jordan. His Ph.D. is from al-Azhar University and it is about the concept of *niyyah* or intention.

Ataa ibn Abu Ribaah [عطاء بن أبي رباح]: Ataa was born in the year 27 A.H. and died in 114 A.H. He narrated hadith from ibn Abbas, ibn Umar, Abdullah ibn Abbas and many others. He is said to have met two hundred of the Companions. He was the leading jurist in Makkah as his time. The narrations that have come down from Ataa on the authority of ibn Abbas, however, are much less than those from Saeed or Mujaahid.

Al-Auzaa'ee [الأوزاعي]: Abdul al-Rahmaan ibn Amr al-Awzai'ee (88/707-157/774) was the Imam of the Syrians in hadith and fiqh. He first lived at al-Awza in Damascus, then moved to Beirut where he died. He composed a book on hadith, and his fiqh dominated Spain for some time.

Ayoob al-Sakhtiyaani [أيوب السختياني]: Abu Bakr Ayyoob al-Sakhtiyaani (66/685-131/748) was a great narrator of hadith and a leading jurist of Basra. He was extremely famous for his piety and simple living.

Al-Baaji [الباجي]: Abu al-Waleed Sulayman ibn Khalaf al-Baaji (d. 474/1081) was a Spanish scholar of hadith, Maliki jurist and judge. He was born in Beja and died in Almeria, Spain. Among his important works was a commentary on the *Muwatta* of Imam Malik.

Al-Baghawi [البغوي]: Abu Muhammad al-Husayn Muhammad al-Baghawi (436/1044-516/1122) is the author of *Sharh al-Sunnah*, a multi-volume collection of hadith. He also compiled a commentary on the Quran, *Ma'alim al-Tanzil*, besides many other books. His *tafseer* is a classic work in which he interpreted the Quran in light of the Quran, hadith and statements of the early generations. He was also the one who compiled the work *Mishkaat al-Sunnah* which was later developed by al-Tabreezi to become *Mishkaat al-Masaabeeh.*

Al-Baihaqi [البيهقي] - see pp. 1189-1190.

Baibars, al-Dhaahir [الظاهر بيبرس]: Baibars (625/1228-686/1277) was of the Kipchak Turks from the northern side of the Black Sea. He was a slave who was finally bought by Sultan al-Saalih Najm al-Deen Ayyoob, of the Ayyoobi rulers in Egypt. He became close to al-Saalih who freed him. Baibars became an excellent warrior and general. He won many battles against the Mongols and crusaders. He arranged to kill the Muslim leader Qutuz and he seized the throne, becoming the fourth of the Mamluk rulers. He was the ruler during a portion of al-Nawawi's life and it was he who al-Nawawi came into conflict with on occasion.

Al-Bugha, Mustafa [مصطفى البغا]: Mustafa al-Bugha is a contemporary author living in Syria. He has written a number of works including, co-authored with Muhyi al-Deen Mistu, a very useful commentary on al-Nawawi's *Forty Hadith*, *Al-Waafi fi Sharh al-Arbaeen al-Nawawiyah.* He has also co-authored some simple works on fiqh based on the Shafi'ee school of fiqh. He, with others, has also finished a commentary on al-Nawawi's *Riyaadh al-Saaliheen.*

Al-Bukhari, Muhammad ibn Ismaaeel [محمد بن إسماعيل البخاري] - see pp. 171-172.

Al-Daaraqutni [الدارقطني] - see pp. 1122-1123.

Al-Daarimi [الدارمي] - see pp. 1039-1040.

al-Dhahabi [الذهبي]: Muhammad al-Dhahabi (673/1274-748/1348) was one of the greatest scholars and critic of hadith and a distinguished historian. He lived and died in Damascus. He is the author of about hundred books, most important of which are *Tadhkirat al-Huffaadh* (biographies of some of the greatest scholars in history), *Meezaan al-'Itidaal fi Naqd al-Rijaal* (a compendium and discussion of criticized narrators), *Tajreed Asma al-Sahabah* (a work about the companions of the Prophet, peace be upon him), *al-Mustadrak 'ala Mustadrak al-Haakim* (a critique of al-Haakim's *Mustadrak*).

In the field of history, he wrote *Duwal al-Islaam*, *Tareekh al-Islaam al-Kabeer* (thirty-six volumes) in history, and *Siyar A'lam al-Nubala`* (twenty-three volumes).

Al-Dhahhaak [الضحاك]: Ibn al-Qasim al-Dahhaak ibn Muzaahim (102/720) was a noted scholar of the Quran. He was a student of Saeed ibn Jubayr, from whom he received many narrations from ibn Abbaas.

Fareed, Ahmad [أحمد فريد]: Ahmad Fareed is a contemporary author living in Egypt. He has written a number of small but inspiring works related to *tazkiyyah* and *taqwa*. Some of his works have been translated into English.

Al-Fudhail ibn Iyaadh [الفضيل بن عياض]: Al-Fudhail was an early, well-respected scholar of Islam. He was born in Samarqand, lived in Abeeward and then traveled seeking knowledge. He studied under Mansoor ibn Saeed, al-Amash, Ataa ibn al-Saaib, Yahya ibn Saeed al-Ansaari, ibn Abu Lailah and many others. His students included Abdullah ibn al-Mubaarak, Yahya al-Qattaan, Abdul Rahmaan ibn Mahdi, al-Shafi'ee and numerous others. He was known to be a trustworthy narrator and scholar of hadith. His narrations are found in al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Daawood and numerous other works. Due to his numerous profound words of wisdom, al-Fudhail is quoted in numerous books, such as al-Ghazzaali's *Ihyaa Uloom al-Deen*, ibn Rajab's *Jaami al-Uloom wa al-Hikm* and so forth.

Al-Ghazzaali [الغزالي]: Abu Haamid Muhammad al-Ghazzaali (450/1058-550/1111) was known for his profound criticism of Greek philosophy and the defense of Islamic faith, although mostly the Ashari approach to faith. He was born at Tus. He studied *fiqh* and *kalam* with Imam al-Haramayn al-Juwayni. He taught in Baghdad, but later gave that up and pursued a Sufi *tareeqah*. He finally settled in his home town and devoted himself to writing and teaching. His writings include many books on Shafi'ee legal theory, most important being *al-Mustasfa fi Ilm al-Usool*. He is most famous for his *Ihyaa 'Uloom al-Deen*, a big of great benefit but also open to much valid criticism.

Al-Haakim [الحاكم]: Abu Abdullah al-Naisaaboori (321/933-405/1014) was the greatest scholar of hadith at his time. He traveled widely and had over 2,000 teachers. He has written a number of books on hadith and made a collection entitled *Mustadrak ala Sahihain*. Unfortunately, though, his grading of hadith was somewhat lax and, therefore, many non-authentic hadith are present in this work. He was called *al-Haakim* because he was appointed the magistrate of Naisaaboor and remained in that post for some time.

Al-Haarith ibn Aasim [الحارث بن عاصم] - see p. 864.

Al-Haitami, Ahmad ibn Hajr [أحمد بن حجر الهيتمي]: Al-Haitami (909/1504-974/1567) was a Shafi'ee scholar from Egypt. He studied at al-Azhar. He lived and wrote for many years in Makkah. He wrote a commentary on al-Nawawi's *Minhaaj al-Taalibeen*, entitled *Tuhfah al-Muhtaaj bi Sharh al-Minhaaj*. He also wrote a commentary on the *Forty Hadith* of al-Nawawi, *Fath al-Mubeen li-Sharh al-Arbaeen*.

Al-Haithami, Noor al-Deen [نور الدين الهيثمي]: Ali ibn Abu Bakr al-Haithami (735/1335-807/1405) was born in Cairo. He was a Shafi'ee scholar and expert in hadith. He gave special attention to the works of al-Tabaraani (concerning which very little work had been done) and, in a work entitled *Majma al-Bahrain*, attempted to discuss the authenticity of the works found in al-Tabaraani's two major works and not in the six works. His most famous work is *Majma al-Zawaaid wa Manba al-Fawaaid*, in which he collected the hadith not found in the standard six works of hadith but collected in al-Tabaraani's works, Ahmad's *Musnad* and other collections of hadith. After almost every hadith, he gives a comment or two about the chain of narrators.

Hasan, Ahmad [أحمد حسن]: Ahmad Hasan is a contemporary scholar born in 1932 in India. In the English language, he has the most in-depth works on Islamic legal theory, including a work on analogy and consensus. In addition, he translated *Sunan Abu Dawood* into English and, apparently, he is working on a new translation with commentary of *Sahih al-Bukhari.*

Al-Hasan ibn Ali ibn Abu Taalib [الحسن بن علي بن أبي طالب] - see pp. 565-566.

Al-Hasan al-Basri [الحسن البصري]: al-Hasan al-Basri (21/642-110/728) was from the "major followers," meaning he had met a large number of companions. He was a great scholar, prolific narrator of hadith, commentator on the Quran, a jurist, preacher and ascetic. Al-Hasan was born two years before the death of Umar ibn al-Khataab. He narrated from Ali, ibn Umar, Anas and many others.

Al-Hilaali, Saleem [سليم الهلالي]: Saleem al-Hilaali is a contemporary author living in Jordan. He is a student of al-Albaani. He has written a commentary on al-Nawawi's *Riyaadh al-Saaliheen.* In addition, he has produced a critical edition of al-Nawawi's *al-Adhkaar*, in which he discusses the grades of the hadith. He has also published an abridgement of ibn Rajab's classic *Jaami al-Uloom wa al-Hikm.*

Hudhaifah [حذيفة]: Abu Abdullah Hudhayfah ibn al-Yamaan (d. 36/656) was a Companion of the Prophet (peace be on him) famous for his chivalry. He had the distinction that the Prophet (peace be on him) had informed him of the names of the hypocrites. He took part in various battles during the reign of 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, who appointed him the governor of al-Madain where he died.

Ibn Abbaas [ابن عباس] - see p. 735.

Ibn Abdul Barr [ابن عبد البر]: Abu Umar Yoosuf ibn Abdullah Ibn Abdul Barr (368/978-463/1071) was a great Maliki scholar of Cordoba in Andalus. For a period of time he acted as the Supreme Judge of Lisbon (now the capital of Portugal). His writings include *al-Istiaab fi Marifat al-Ashaab* (a biographical work on the Companions of the Prophet (peace be on him)), *al-Tamheed li ma fi al-Muwatta min al-Ma'ani wa-l-Asaaneed* (a commentary on the hadith in Imam Malik's *Muwatta*), *Jaami' Bayaan al-'Ilm wa Fadlihi* and others.

Ibn Abideen, Muhammad Ameen [محمد أمين بن عابدين]: Muhammad Ameen ibn Umar (1198/1784-1252/1836) was born in Damascus. He became perhaps the greatest Hanafi scholar of his time. His most important work was *Haashiyah al-Radd al-Muhtaar ala al-Durr al-Mukhtaar.* This work is a compendium of Hanafi fiqh in which he strives to distinguish the correct Hanafi views from the weak ones.

Ibn Abu Haatim [ابن أبي حاتم]: Ibn Abu Haatim was a great scholar of *tafseer* and hadith, the son of one of the greatest scholars of hadith (Abu Haatim al-Raazi). His important works include a biographical dictionary of a large number of narrators of hadith. Ibn Abu Haatim lived during the same time as al-Tabari, al-Bukhari, Muslim, al-Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud and many other scholars. His students included ibn Hibbaan, al-Haakim and ibn Mundah.

Ibn Abu al-Izz [ابن أبي العز]: Sadruddin Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Ala al-Deen Ali Abu al-Izz Saalih (731/1331-792/1390) was born in Damascus. Ibn Abu al-Izz grew up in a family of Hanafi scholars and judges. All of the schools wherein he taught were dedicated to the teaching of Hanafi fiqh. And the judgeship he served was also that of a Hanafi judge. However, he himself was against the blind following of any particular school and he even wrote a short treatise on that question. He is probably most famous for his informative commentary on al-Tahaawi's short creed. This work, known as *Sharh al-Aqeedah al-Tahaawiyyah*, is considered an excellent presentation of the correct beliefs based on the Quran, sunnah and way of the Companions and their followers.

Ibn Abu Shaibah [ابن أبي شيبة]: Abu Bakr Abdullah ibn Abu Shaibah (d. 235/849) was a leading scholar of hadith from Kufah. He is the author of *al-Musannaf fi al-Ahaadeeth wa al-Athar*, a *Musnad* and other books.

Ibn Adi [ابن عدي]: Abu Ahmad Abdullah ibn Adi al-Jurjaani (277-365) was originally from Jurjaan but traveled far and wide seeking knowledge. He became one of the prominent scholars of hadith in his time. He best known work is a large work discussing weak narrators, entitled *al-Kaamil fi Dhuafaa al-Rijaal.*

Ibn Arabi [ابن عربي]: Abu Bakr Muhiy al-Deen Muhammad ibn Ali al-Taa`i, commonly known as ibn 'Arabi (560/1165-638/1240), was born in Murcia (Spain) and died in Damascus. He expounded and elaborated the philosophy of *wahdat al-wujood* (pantheism, monism). Although some of his writings are filled with statements that are apparently clearly *kufr*, his followers and devotees have done their best to reinterpret such statements to make them acceptable according to the *shareeah.*

ibn al-Arabi [ابن العربي]: Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah ibn Muhammad, commonly known as ibn al-'Arabi, was a scholar of the Quran, hadith and Maliki fiqh. He was born in Ishbiliah, Spain in 468/1085. He served there as a judge. He died in 543/1148 in al-Adwa in the East and was buried in Fas. His writings include *Ahkaam al-Quran*, *al-Masalik fi Sharh Muwatta Malik* and *al-Qawaasim wa al-'Awaasim.*

Ibn Ashoor [ابن عاشور]: Muhammad al-Taahir ibn Ashoor (d. 1393 C.E.) was the head of the Mufti Malikis in Tunisia. He was the head scholar of the university of Zaitoonah. His writings include *Maqaasid al-Shareeah al-Islaamiyah* (a book on the goals of the *shareeah*) and a *tafseer* entitled *al-Tahreer wa al-Tanweer.*

Ibn al-Atheer [ابن الأثير]: Majd al-Deen Abu al-Sadaat al-Mubaarak ibn al-Atheer al-Jazari (d. 606/1209) is famous for his *Jaami' al-Usool fi Ahaadeeth al-Rasool* in which he put together the hadith of al-Bukhari, Muslim, al-Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud, al-Nasaai and the *Muwatta* of Malik. He also compiled a dictionary of difficult words found in hadith, *al-Nihaayah fi Ghareeb al-Hadeeth wa-l-Athar.*

Ibn al-Attaar [ابن العطار]: Alaa al-Deen ibn Ibraaheem ibn al-Attaar (654-724) was a Shafi'ee scholar who studied with scholars throughout the Hijaz, Naabilus and Egypt. However, he became a devoted student of al-Nawawi and stayed with him exclusively for six years. He was so knowledgeable of al-Nawawi's teachings that he became to be known as, "the abridger of al-Nawawi." Among his works was a biography of al-Nawawi entitled, *Tuhfah al-Taalibeen fi Tarjumah al-Imaam Muhyi al-Deen.*

Ibn Baaz, Abdul Azeez [عبد العزيز بن باز]: Abdul Azeez ibn Abdullah is a contemporary scholar who was born in Riyadh in 1330 A.H. His teachers included Muhammad ibn Ibraaheem, the past Mufti of Saudi Arabia. He has been blind since his youth but his well-known for his great memory, especially in the field of hadith. He taught for many years and was also the Chancellor of the Islamic University in Madinah. He is currently the Grand Mufti and President of the General Presidency of Islamic Research, Ifta, Call and Propagation of Saudi Arabia.

Ibn Daqeeq al-Eid [ابن دقيق العيد]: Muhammad ibn Ali al-Qushairi (d. 702/1302), known was ibn Daqeeq al-Eid, was born in Yanbu in the Hijaz. He was a Shafi'ee scholar who had studied in Damascus, Alexandria and Cairo. One of his greatest contributions was a study of hadith related to *ahkaam* (hadith related to law and legal matters). He also wrote a short but useful commentary on al-Nawawi's *Forty Hadith.*

Ibn Hajr [ابن حجر]: Abu al-Fadl Ahmad ibn Ali ibn Hajr al-Asqellaani (773-852) was the greatest scholar of hadith at his time. For ten years he studied under the renowned scholar Zain al-Deen al-Iraaqi who had done so much to revive the study of hadith. Ibn Hajr wrote at least 150 works. His commentary, *Fath al-Baari*, on *Sahih al-Bukhari* is one of the definitive works of Islam. He also wrote *al-Isaaba fi Tamyeez al-Sahaaba* which is a work on the Companions. In the field of biographical dictionaries he compiled such masterpieces as *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb*, *Taqreeb al-Tahdheeb* and *Lisaan al-Meezaan.*

Ibn Hazm [ابن حزم]: Abu Muhammad Ali ibn Hazm (384/994-456/1064) was a man of letters and a poet, Dhaahiri in fiqh, rationalist in theology, and a historian of theology. He was born in Cordoba. His writings include *al-Muhalla* in fiqh, *al-Ihkaam fi Usool al-Ahkaam* in principles of jurisprudence, and *al-Fasl fi-l-Milal wa-l-Ahwa` wa-l-Nihal* in theology.

Ibn Hibbaan [ابن حبان]: Abu Haatim Muhammad ibn Hibbaan al-Tameemi al-Busti (d. 354/965) was born in Afghanistan. He was known to be a Shafi'ee scholar but his greatest contribution was in the field of hadith. He attempted to make a collection of only authentic hadith which has become known as *Saheeh ibn Hibbaan.* However, he arranged it in such a way that only one who had read or was familiar with the book would be able to find its particular hadith. Therefore, a later scholar, al-Faarisi, rearranged the work according to topic. He also has an important book on trustworthy narrators, *Kitaab al-Thiqaat*, as well as one on weak and rejected narrators, *Kitaab al-Majrooheen min al-Muhaditheen wa al-Dhuafaa wa al-Matrookeen.*

Ibn al-Humaam [ابن الهمام]: Kamaal al-Deen Muhammad ibn Abdul Waahid ibn al-Humaam (790/1388-861/1457) was born in Alexandria, Egypt and died in Cairo. He spent must of his time in Makkah, Madinah and Aleppo. He was an excellent Hanafi jurist and wrote *Fath al-Qadeer*, a commentary on the standard Hanafi work by al-Marghinaani *al-Hidaayah.* Unfortunately, he did not finish that work and others have finished the work based on his methodology.

Ibn Jamaah, Badr al-Deen [بدر الدين بن جماعة]: Ibn Jamaah (d. 733), one of al-Nawawi's students, was a leading Shafi'ee jurist and scholar of hadith. He was also a judge for many years.

Ibn al-Jauzi [ابن الجوزي]: Abdul Rahmaan ibn Ali ibn al-Jauzi (508/1114-597/1201) was from Baghdad. He was a great scholar experienced in Hanbali fiqh, hadith, *tafseer*, Arabic grammar and history. His *tafseer*, *Zaad al-Maseer*, is excellent for recording and discussing the different interpretations of each verse. He also compiled one of the largest collections of fabricated hadith (recently published in four volumes), although he was very harsh in that area and included many hadith in that collection that other scholars do not consider fabricated.

Ibn Katheer [ابن كثير]: Imad al-Din ibn Katheer (700/1301-774/1372) was a scholar of *tafseer*, language, fiqh, history and hadith. He was a student of ibn Taimiya and the introduction to his *tafseer* was actually taken directly from one of ibn Taimiya's works. Ibn Katheer was born in Jandal in the province of Basrah and then moved to Damascus where he died. His works include the famous commentary of the Quran, entitled *Tafseer al-Qur`an al-'Azim*, a voluminous work on history, *al-Bidaayah wa al-Nihaayah*, a summary of ibn Salah's *Uloom al-Hadith*, and *Kutub al-Huda fi Ahaadeeth al-Masaaneed wa al-Sunan* and *al-Takmeel fi Ma'rifat al-Thiqaat wa-l-Dhuafaa wa-l-Majaheel.*

Ibn Khuzaima [ابن خزيمة]: Muhammad ibn Ishaaq ibn Khuzaima (223/838-311/924) was from Persia and traveled widely in search of knowledge, to Iraq, Syria, Arabia and Egypt. He made a hadith collection, *Mukhtasar al-Mukhtasar*, that is known as *Saheeh ibn Khuzaimah.*

Ibn Maajah [ابن ماجه] - see pp. 1132-1133.

Ibn Masood, Abdullah [عبد الله بن مسعود]: see pp. 392-393.

Ibn al-Mubaarak [ابن المبارك]: Abu Abdul Rahmaan Abdullah ibn al-Mubaarak (118/736-181/797) was a famous scholar of hadith. He traveled a great deal and collected hadith. He lived off of trade, participated in jihad and gave generously for the sake of Allah. He made a collection of hadith on jihad and another on *al-riqaq* ("words that soften the heart"). He was born in Marwa and died in Hit near al-Raqqah in Iraq.

Ibn al-Qayyim [ابن القيم]: Shams al-Deen Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn al-Qayyim, commonly known as ibn al-Qayyim or ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyyah, was an eminent scholar of the Quran, hadith, fiqh and principles of jurisprudence. He was known for his inspiring and moving writings. He was born in Damascus where he studied with his teacher ibn Taimiya for sixteen years and became his most distinguished disciple. His writings include *Zaad al-Ma'ad* (a work on the life and practice of the Prophet), *I'laam al-Muwaqi'een* in jurisprudence, and *Madaarij al-Saalikeen* (a commentary on the Sufi text *Manaazil al-Saa`ireen* by Abdullah al-Ansaari al-Haruwi covering *tazkiyah*).

Ibn Qudaamah [ابن قدامة]: Muwaffaq al-Deen Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn Qudaamah (541/1146-620/1233) was from Palestine. He came from a family that is known for its great scholarship in the Hanbali school of fiqh. Muwaffaq al-Deen wrote one of the greatest works in fiqh, *al-Mughni*, which goes well beyond the confines of the Hanbali opinions.

Ibn Rajab [ابن رجب]: Abu al-Faraj Abdul Rahmaan ibn Shihaab al-Deen ibn Rajab (736-795) was born in Baghdad. He came from a family well-known for its religious learning and scholarship. He traveled to Damascus, Egypt and other places to attain knowledge. In fact, he has an impressive list of teachers which includes Khaleel al-Alaai. He was a great Hanbali jurist and wrote a large number of books covering a large range of topics. Among his most useful works is *Jaami al-Uloom wa al-Hikm*, which is an in depth commentary on fifty hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him), the forty-two hadith from al-Nawawi's *Forty Hadith* and an additional eight hadith added by ibn Rajab. He also has a very important commentary on *Sahih al-Bukhaari*, entitled *Fath al-Baari*; unfortunately, he was not able to complete that work.

Ibn Rushd [ابن رشد]: Abu al-Waleed Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Rushd, the great Spanish jurist, judge and philosopher, was born in Cordoba in 520/1126 and died in Morocco in 595/1199. His writings include a very popular work on comparative fiqh, *Bidaayat al-Mujtahid wa Nihaayat al-Muqtasid*, a refutation of al-Ghazzaali's refutation of philosophy, *Tahafut al-Tahafut*, and an exposition of his own method in theology, *al-Kashf an Manahif al-Adillah fi 'Aqaa`id al-Millah*.

Ibn al-Salaah [ابن الصلاح]: Uthmaan ibn Abdul Rahmaan ibn Uthmaan ibn al-Salaah (d. 643) was the *mufti* and scholar of hadith for al-Shaam region. He traveled in search of knowledge to many different countries, settled in Jerusalem and then later moved to Damascus. He was known for his piety and fear of Allah. He wrote many important books, especially in the field of hadith. His "Introduction" to the field (*Muqaddimah*) became the standard work in the field for many years afterwards.

Ibn Seereen [ابن سيرين]: Ibn Seereen (33-110) was the son of an ex-slave (his father) of Anas ibn Malik and the ex-slave (his mother) of Abu Bakr. He was born during the time of Uthmaan. He met about thirty Companions and narrated hadith from Zaid ibn Thabit, Anas ibn Malik, Abu Huraira, Hudhaifa ibn al-Yaman and others. Al-Shuba, al-Auzaai'ee, Maalik ibn Deenaar and others narrated hadith from him.

Ibn Taimiya, Ahmad [أحمد بن تيمية]: Ahmad ibn Taimiya (661/1263-728/1328) came from a Hanbali family known for its piety and religious knowledge. Ibn Taimiya spent most of his life in Damascus. He struggled against the numerous innovations that had appeared among the Muslims, related to beliefs, *tazkiyyah* and everyday practices. He called people to return to the true Islam of the Quran, the sunnah and the way of the Companions. His writings were very convincing and filled with irrefutable arguments from the Quran and sunnah. Besides being a great intellect, he was also a *mujaahid* and he fought valiantly against the Tartars and others. Some of his most important students included ibn al-Qayyim, ibn Katheer and al-Dhahabi. His influence continues to this day and is felt throughout the world. Much of his writings were compiled in a thirty-seven volume set entitled *Majmoo Fatawa Shaikh al-Islaam ibn Taimiya*.

Ibn Umar, Abdullah [عبد الله بن عمر]: see pp. 334-335.

Ibn Uthaimeen, Muhammad ibn Saalih [محمد بن صالح بن عثيمين]: Muhammad ibn Uthaimeen is a contemporary scholar who was born in Unaiza, Saudi Arabia in 1347 A.H. He studied with scholars such as Abdul Rahmaan al-Saadi and Muhammad Ameen al-Shanqeeti. He is respected as one of the more wellgrounded jurists of the present time. He is currently teaching at the Qaseem Branch of Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University.

Ibraaheem al-Waasiti [إبراهيم الواسطي] Abu Ishaaq Ibraheem al-Waasiti (d. 692) was one of al-Nawawi’s teachers. He was a Hanbali jurist and toward the end of his life, he was in charge of Daar al-Hadeeth al-Dhaahiriyyah. He was well-known for his piety and his affect on the people’s hearts.

Idris, Jaafar Sheikh [جعفر شيخ إدريس]: Jaafar Idris is a contemporary scholar from Sudan. He received a Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of London. He taught for many years at Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University in Riyadh and the Institute of Islamic and Arabic Sciences in America. He is currently associated with the American Open University. He has written a number of articles on modern thought and its Islamic critique.

Ikrimah [عكرمة]: Abu Abdullah Ikramah was a Berber slave of ibn Abbaas, freed after the death of his master by the latter’s son, Ali. He distinguished himself as a scholar of the Quran. Al-Sha’bi said about him, “There is no one on the earth more knowledgeable about the Book of Allah than Ikrimah.”

Imaam al-Haramain al-Juwaini [إمام الحرمين الجويني]: Abu al-Maali Abdul Maalik al-Juwayni (419/1028-478/1085), commonly known as Imaam al-Haramayn, was a great Shafi’ee legal theorist and one of the leaders of the Asharis during his time. He was originally from Juwayn, a small town in the vicinity of Nishaboor in Iran. Before his death, he is recorded to have repented from the philosophical beliefs that he had held that went against the Quran and sunnah.

Al-Iraaqi, Zain al-Deen [زين الدين العراقي]: Abdul Rahmaan ibn al-Husain al-Iraaqi (725/1325-806/1404) was from a Kurdish family and born in Iraq. He later moved to Cairo. He became one of the leading Shafi’ee scholars and scholars of hadith at his time. Among his many students was ibn Hajr. One of his most important works is a detailed study of the hadith used by al-Ghazzaali in his *Ihyaa Uloom al-Deen*, a work notorious for its use of weak and unacceptable hadith.

Al-Irbaadh ibn Saariyah [العرباض بن سارية] - see p. 1046.

Ishaaq ibn Ahmad al-Maghribi al-Maqdisi [إسحاق بن أحمد المغربي المقدسي]: Ishaaq (d. 650 A.H.) was one of the teachers of al-Nawawi. He was originally from North Africa but moved to al-Shaam. He became one of the leaders of the Shafi’ees there and directed the Rawaahiyah school for some twenty years. He was known for his piety. Al-Nawawi himself spoke very highly of him in the beginning of his *Tahdheeb al-Asmaa wa al-Laughaat*.

Ishaaq ibn Raahawaih [إسحاق بن راهويه]: Abu Muhammad Ishaaq ibn Ibraaheem Rahawaih (161/778-238/952) was a most distinguished scholar of hadith in Khurasaan. Al-Bukhari, Muslim, al-Tirmidhi and other scholars of hadith have recorded his hadith. Some scholars prefer to pronounce his name Rahooyah.

Jaabir ibn Abdullah [جابر بن عبدالله] - see pp. 847-848.

Jad ibn Dirham [جعد بن درهم]: Jad ibn Dirham (d. 118/736) was the teacher of Marwan ibn Muhammad, the governor of Iraq during the reign of Hishaam ibn Abdul Maalik. He also influenced the views of al-Jahm ibn Safwan, the founder of the Jahmiyah. Ja’d believed that man had no free will, that the Quran is created, that Allah did not speak to Moses, and that Allah did not take Abraham as an intimate friend. On account of these blasphemies, Khaalid al-Qasri, the governor of Iraq, killed him.

Jahm ibn Safwaan [جهم بن صفوان]: Jahm ibn Safwan was the founder of the Jahmiyah. He was born in Khurasan and lived his early years in Tirmidh. He debated with Buddhists, leading him to complete skepticism. After forty days he regained faith in God but, following Jad ibn Dirham, he denied that God had attributes over and above His Essence. He also denied freedom of will and the eternity of Paradise and Hell. He was killed in a battle against the Umayyads.

Kamali, Mohammad Hashim: Dr. Kamali is a Professor of Law at the International Islamic University in Malaysia. He has been teaching there since 1985. He was born into a religious family in Afghanistan in 1944. His work, *Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence*, is one of the most comprehensive introductions to Islamic legal theory available in English.

Al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadi [الخطيب البغدادي]: Abu Bakr Ahmad ibn Ali, known as Al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadi, (392/1002-463/1072) was an expert in the science of knowing the narrators. He compiled the work *Tareekh Baghdaad* which is a voluminous work on the narrators of hadith who had lived in or passed through Baghdad. He compiled about 56 books on almost every aspect of the hadith sciences. For example, he wrote a work on travelling in search of hadith as well as one on how to transmit hadith. His best known work in the field of hadith was probably *al-Kifaaya fi ilm al-Riwaaya.* He left the Hanbali school of thought and joined the Shafi'ee school of thought and he had to suffer the consequences of such a change. He was known as the *haafidh* (preserver of knowledge) of the East while his contemporary ibn Abdul Barr was known as the *haafidh* of the West.

Al-Khattaabi [الخطابي]: Abu Sulaimaan Hamad ibn Muhammad al-Khattaabi came from Bust in Afghanistan. He traveled widely in search of religious knowledge, to Makkah, Basra, Baghdad and Naisaboor. He wrote an excellent commentary on Abu Dawood's *Sunan*, *Maalim al-Sunan.* This work has been quoted and used by all of the major hadith commentators who came afterwards.

Al-Khallaal [الخلال]: Abu Bakr Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Khallaal (d. 310/922) was a leading scholar of hadith and a Hanbali jurist at Baghdad.

Al-Laith ibn Saad [الليث بن سعد]: Abu al-Haarith al-Laith ibn Saad (94/713-175/791) was the most famous scholar of Egypt of his time and an eminent jurist. Al-Shafi'ee has said that he was a better jurist than Malik. He did not have excellent students like those of the other masters to develop his fiqh, so his fiqh soon died out. He was born in Khurasaan. He served as a judge in Cairo, where he died.

Al-Laalakaai [اللالكائي]: Abu al-Qaasim Hibatullah ibn al-Hasan al-Tabari al-Laalakaai (d. 418/1027) was a scholar of hadith, a Shafi'i jurist and a theologian. He was originally from Iran but settled in Baghdad and died in Dinaur. His writings include *Sharh Usool Itiqaad Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah*, *Madhahib Ahl al-Sunnah*, *Kitaab Rijaal al-Sahaabah*, *Karamaat al-Auliyaa`* and others.

Maalik ibn Anas [مالك بن أنس] - see pp. 1158-1159.

Maalik ibn Dinaar [مالك بن دينار]: Abu Yahya Maalik ibn Dinaar (d. 131/748) hailed from Basra. He met Anas ibn Maalik of the Companions. He studied under al-

Hasan al-Basri, ibn Seereen and others. He was known for his *zuhd* and insightful statements.

Al-Maawardi, Abu al-Hasan Ali [أبو الحسن على الماوردي]: Al-Maawardi (364/974-450/1058) was born in Basra and held important judicial posts under the Abbasid *khaleefah* al-Qaaim bi-Amri-llaah. He is one of the leading Shafi'ee scholars throughout history. He has written a large work on Shafi'ee fiqh entitled *al-Haawi*. He also wrote a very useful commentary on the Quran. However, he may be best known for his writing on the rules of government, *Ahkaam al-Sultaaniyyah*.

Makhool [مكحول]: Abu Abdullah Makhool (d. 112/730) ibn Abu Muslim was born in Kabul, Afghanistan. He was a freed slave who dedicating his time to learning. He lived in Syria and was respected as one of its leading scholars.

Maudoodi, Abul Ala [أبو الأعلى مودودي]: Abul Ala Maudoodi was a Muslim leader of this century and the founder of the Jamaat Islami in Pakistan. He passed away in 1979 C.E. Very active in trying to establish a true Islamic state, Maudoodi was imprisoned on a number of occasions. Maudoodi wrote numerous books and a large number of them have been translated into English. The goal of the *Tafhim al-Quran*, his commentary on the Quran, was to present the meaning of the Quran to the Urdu speaking populous of Pakistan/India in such a way that its meaning would be very clear to the masses. Two different translations (an earlier one and then a revised one with improved English) are available in English.

Mistu, Muhy al-Deen [محي الدين مستو]: Muhy al-Deen Mistu is a contemporary author living in Syria. He has written a number of works including, co-authored with Mustafa Bugha, a very useful commentary on al-Nawawi's *Forty Hadith*, *Al-Waafi fi Sharh al-Arbaeen al-Nawawiyah.* He has also co-authored some simple works on fiqh based on the Shafi'ee school of fiqh. He, with others, has also finished a commentary on al-Nawawi's *Riyaadh al-Saaliheen.* He also has co-authored some works on the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Al-Mizzi, Jamaal al-Deen [جمال الدين المزي]: Yoosuf al-Mizzi (d. 744), a student of al-Nawawi, became one of the greatest scholars of hadith, as he traveled to gather knowledge of hadith for twenty years. He was known for his good character and politeness. He compiled a biographical dictionary of hadith narrators entitled *Tahdheeb al-Kamaal fi Asmaa al-Rijaal*, which became the standard for many later works, such as ibn Hajr's *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb.*

Muaadh ibn Jabal [معاذ بن جبل] - see pp. 696-697.

Muaawiyah [معاوية]: Muawiyah was the son of Abu Sufyan Sakhr ibn Harb ibn Umayyah. He embraced Islam in 8 A.H., when Makkah was conquered. As a scribe of the Prophet (peace be on him), he was from those who was given the job of recording the Quranic revelations. He served as governor of Jordan at the time of Umar and of all of Syria at the time of Uthmaan. When Ali became the caliph, he did not submit to him. This led to the Battle of Siffeen. After Ali's death, his son Hasan handed over the caliphate to Mu'awiyah in 41 A.H. Mu'awiyah continued to rule until his death in 60/680. He was the founder of the Umayyad rule and a great administrator.

Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Shaibaani [محمد بن الحسن الشيباني]: Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Shaibaani (131/748-189/864) was, along with Abu

Yoosuf, the most distinguished disciple of Abu Hanifah. He also studied under Imam Malik and passed on the entire *Muwatta* from Malik himself. He was born in Waasit and spent his early years in Kufah where he joined the company of Abu Hanifah. Later, he moved to Baghdad and was appointed judge. He died in al-Ray. Hanafi fiqh owes more to him for its development than to anyone else. His works include *al-Mabsoot* (a compendium of fiqh), *al-Siyar* (in international law), *al-Hujjah ala ahl al-Madinah*, *al-Jaami al-Kabeer* and *al-Jaami al-Sagheer*.

Mujaahid [مجاهد]: Mujaahid ibn Jabar was born in the year 21 A.H. during the caliphate of Umar ibn al-Khataab. He died in Makkah in the year 104 A.H., while he was in the act of prostration. He was considered an extremely trustworthy narrator. Al-Shafi'ee and al-Bukhari relied upon his narrations. Many of his reports may be found in *Sahih al-Bukhari* in, "The Book of *Tafseer*". Mujaahid as the youngest of ibn Abbas' major students in *tafseer*. At the same time, he was one of the best and most reliable narrators on ibn Abbas' authority. Mujaahid stated, "I read the Quran to ibn Abbas three times and I stopped after every verse, asking, 'Concerning what and when was that revealed?'" Ibn Abu Mulaikah said, "I saw Mujaahid asking ibn Abbas concerning *tafseer* of the Quran and he had his tablets with him. Ibn Abbas said, 'Record,' until he had asked him about all of the *tafseer*." Sufyan al-Thauri said about Mujaahid, "If the *tafseer* comes from Mujaadid, that should suffice for you."

Al-Munaawi, Abdul Raoof [عبد الرؤوف المناوي]: Al-Munaawi (952/1545-1031/1622) was a Shafi'ee scholar who lived in Cairo. He produced a number of works, perhaps the most important being related to hadith. For example, he wrote a commentary on al-Suyooti's *al-Jaami al-Sagheer*, entitled *Faidh al-Qadeer*. Through lack of food and sleep, he became ill and weak, leading up to his death.

Muslim ibn al-Hajjaaj al-Naisaboori [مسلم بن الحجاج النيسابوري] - see pp. 172-173.

Naafi [نافع]: Al-Naafi (d. 117) was an ex-slave of Abdullah ibn Umar ibn al-Khattaab. He was one of the Major Followers and one of the early jurists. Imam Malik was one of his closest companions and students. Al-Bukhari said that the most authentic chain is Malik *an* Naafi *an* Ibn Umar. He related hadith from Abu Saeed al-Khudri, Aisha and Hafsa, although many of his reports on their authority are *mursal*. Abdullah ibn Dinaar, al-Zuhri, al-Auzaa'ee, ibn Ishaaq and Ibn Juraij related hadith on his authority. The Caliph Umar ibn Abdul Aziz sent him to Egypt to teach the people there about Islam.

Al-Nakhai, Ibraaheem [إبراهيم النخعي]: Ibraaheem ibn Yazeed ibn Qays al-Aswad al-Nakhai (46/666-96/715) was one of the most eminent Successors. He distinguished himself as a jurist; in fact, he developed a fiqh of his own, and was known as the jurist of Iraq. Much of this fiqh was passed on by the members of the Hanafi school. He lived in Kufah.

Al-Nasaai [النسائي] - see pp. 570-571.

Al-Nawwaas ibn Samaan [النواس بن سمعان] - see pp. 1014-1015.

al-Nawawi, Abu Zakariyyah Yahya [أبو زكريا النووي] - see pp. 9-55.

Al-Numaan ibn Basheer [النعمان بن بشير] - see pp. 453-454.

Qaadhi Iyaadh al-Yahsubi [قاضي عياض اليحصبي]: Qaadhi Abu al-Fadl Iyaadh ibn Musa (476/1083—544/1149) was a scholar of hadith. He was born in Sibtah in Spain and died of poisoning in Maracco. Among his works, the most famous is his work on the life of the Prophet, *al-Shifaa fi Tareef Huqooq al-Mustafa*. He also had a very influential and important commentary on *Sahih Muslim*.

Al-Qaari, al-Mulla Ali [الملا علي القارى]: Ali ibn Sultan Muhammad (d. 1014/1601) was born in Hiraat, Afghanistan but lived much of his life in Makkah. He was a Hanafi jursist as well as a specialist in hadith studies. Among his important works is *Mirqaat al-Mafateeh Sharh Mishkaat al-Masabeeh*, a commentary on *Mishkaat al-Masaabeeh*.

Al-Qaasimi, Jamaal al-Deen [جمال الدين القاسمي]: Jamaal al-Deen Muhammad al-Qaasimi (1866 C.E.-1914 C.E.) was born in Damascus. He devoted his life to calling people back to the way of the Quran, sunnah and the Companions, in a struggle against the widespread innovations of his time. His most important works include an excellent commentary on the Quran, entitled *Mahaasin al-Taweel*, as well as a book on the principles of hadith, *Qawaaid al-Tahdeeth*.

Al-Qaraafi [القرافي]: Abu al-Abbaas Ahmad ibn Idrees al-Sanhaaji al-Qaraafi (d. 684) was from Egypt. He became the leading Maliki scholar of his time, specializing in both fiqh and Islamic legal theory. His work *al-Dhakheerah* is one of the most detailed books on Maliki fiqh. In legal theory, his best work is *Nafaais al-Usool fi Sharh al-Mahsool.*

Qataadah [قتادة]: Abu al-Khattaab Qataadah ibn Daamah (61/680-118/736) was a blind man of extraordinary memory. He was the most distinguished narrator of hadith in Basrah. He met and narrated hadith from the Companions Anas ibn Maallik. He was also well-known for his knowledge of *tafseer*.

Al-Qurtubi, Abu Abdullah Muhammad [أبو عبد الله محمد القرطبي]: Abu Abdullah Muhammad al-Qurtubi (d. 671/1273) was a famous scholar of the Quran and theologian from Andalus. His commentary on the Quran, entitled *al-Jaami li-Ahkaam al-Quran*, is one of the best ever written. It is a commentary from a juristic point of view. Although al-Qurtubi himself was a Maliki jurist, his commentary goes well beyond the confines of the Maliki school.

Al-Qushairi [القشيري]: Abdul Kareem ibn Hawaazin al-Qushairi (d. 465/1072) was a student of Abu Ali al-Daqqaaq (d. 405/1014) in Sufism. He is famous for his *al-Risaalah* which is a most authentic and comprehensive introduction to Sufi practices, experiences and concepts as developed by the early Sufis. He also had a commentary on the Quran, *Lataa`if al-Isharaat*, and other books.

Al-Raafi'ee [الرافعي]: Abdul Kareem ibn Muhammad al-Raafi'ee (557/1162-623/1226) was originally from Persia. He spent much of his life in Qazween. He was known for his knowledge of fiqh and *tafseer*. He became the unquestionable leader of the Shafi'ees during his time. He most important work was *Fath al-Azeez fi Sharh al-Wajeez*, a commentary on *al-Wajeez*, which was al-Ghazzaali's Shafi'ee fiqh manual.

Al-Raaghib al-Isfahaani [الراغب الاصفهاني]: Al-Raaghib al-Isfahaani died in the year 425 A.H. It seems that not much is known about his early life, even his name and the names of his teachers are not exactly known. However, he did leave behind some very important works. His *Mufradaat Alfaadh al-Quran* is a widely accepted work on the vocabulary of the Quran. He is also known to have written a *tafseer* of the Quran. One of his other important works was entitled, *al-Dhakheerah ila Makaarim al-Shareeah.*

Al-Raazi, Fakhr al-Deen [فخر الدين الرازي]: Fakhr al-Deen Muhammad ibn 'Umar al-Raazi (d. 544/1149) was an Asharite theologian and a philosopher. He wrote a very extensive commentary on the Quran, *Mafateeh al-Ghaib*, commonly known as *al-Tafsir al-Kabir*. His *tafseer* covers so much material that some have said that it contains everything except *tafseer*. He was also a gifted Shafi'ee jurist and legal theorist. His work, *al-Mahsool fi Ilm al-Usool*, is a standard work on Shafi'ee legal theory. Before his death, he showed disdain for the amount of time he had wasted in philosophical debates that were not based on the Quran and sunnah.

Al-Saadi, Abdul Rahmaan [عبد الرحمن السعدي]: Abdul Rahmaan al-Saadi (1307-1376) was born in Unaizah, Saudi Arabia. His teachers included Uthmaan al-Qaadhi (the judge of Unaizah) and Muhammad al-Shanqeeti. Over ten of his books have been published, including a somewhat brief but beneficial commentary on the Quran, *Taiseer al-Kareem al-Rahmaan.*

al-Sadlaan, Saalih [صالح السدلان]: Saalih al-Sadlaan is a contemporary author and professor at Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. He was born in Buraidah, Saudi Arabia in 1362 A.H. Al-Sadlaan is specialized in fiqh and has written on such topics as *al-nushooz* (marital discord) and pre-nuptial agreements. His Ph.D. dissertation in Comparative Fiqh was concerning the topic of *niyyah* or intention.

Saeed ibn Jubair [سعيد بن جبير]: Saeed ibn Jubair (d. 95) was, according to Sufyaan al-Thauri, one of the experts of the Quran. He related hadith from Abdullah ibn al-Zubair, Anas ibn Maalik and Abu Saeed al-Khudri. He never heard any hadith from Abu Huraira, Abu Musa al-Ashari, Ali or Aisha; any report from him on their authority is *mursal.* Al-Amash, Mansur ibn al-Mutamar, Yahya ibn Hukaim and others were his students.

Saeed ibn al-Musayyab [سعيد بن المسيب]: Saeed ibn al-Musayyab (14-94) was the most virtuous of the Followers according to Imam Ahmad. His father and grandfather were both Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). He was one of the "seven jurists of Madina." He would relate from Abu Bakr in *mursal* form although he did hear hadith from Umar, Uthmaan, Ali, Zaid ibn Thaabit and Abu Huraira. Saalim ibn Abdullah, al-Zuhri, Qataada, Shuraik and others narrated on his authority. Saeed was the most prominent member of the seven jurists of Madinah. There is no question that prior to Imam Malik and the status he obtained, Saeed was considered the leader of the Hijazi/Madinan school of fiqh.

Sahl ibn Saad al-Saaidi [سهل بن سعد الساعدي] - see pp. 1132.

al-Sakhaawi [السخاوي]: Muhammad ibn Abdul Rahmaan al-Sakhaawi (831-902) was a Shafi'ee scholar and writer from Egypt. He was a student of ibn Hajr. His important works include a lengthy commentary on al-Iraaqi's *Alfiyah* in hadith. He also wrote an excellent biography on the life of al-Nawawi.

Salmaan, Mashhoor Hasan [مشهور حسن سلمان]: Mashhoor Hasan Salmaan is a contemporary scholar who was born in Palestine in 1380. His family moved to Jordan and he joined the Shareeah College and studied Fiqh and its Principles. His teachers include Muhammad Naasir al-Deen al-Albaani and Mustafa al-

Zarqaa. He is the author or editor of over one hundred books, which include some of the classic works of past scholars, including al-Shaatibi's *Muwaafaqaat*.

Shaakir, Ahmad [أحمد شاكر]: Ahmad Shaakir (1309/1892-1377/1958) was born in Cairo, Egypt. His teachers included his father Muhammad Shaakir, who was a well-respected scholar, Muhammad ibn al-Ameen al-Shanqeeti and Jamaal al-Deen al-Qaasimi. His efforts greatly contributed to the revitalization of the study of hadith. Among his important works, was a critical edition of *Musnad Ahmad*, in which he discussed the grading of the hadith and also made valuable commentary every now and then. In addition, along with his brother Mahmood, he prepared a critical edition of al-Tabari's *tafseer*, commenting on the chains for the different narrations al-Tabari used. Unfortunately, Shaakir died before completing either of those two works but he did complete a number of other important works, such as publishing al-Shafi'ee's *al-Risaalah* and ibn Hazm's *al-Muhalla*.

Al-Shaatibi [الشاطبي]: Abu Ishaaq Ibraaheem ibn Musa al-Shaatibi (d. 790) was a great Maliki scholar from Granada, Andalus. He excelled in fiqh, legal theory and Arabic language. One of his works, *al-Muwaafiqaat*, is a profound and unique study of the *shareeah* as a whole. Another important work of his is a discussion of true adherence to the sunnah vis-a-vis heresies, entitled *al-Itisaam*.

Al-Shafi'ee, Muhammad ibn Idrees [محمد بن إدريس الشافعي]: Muhammad ibn Idrees al-Qurashi al-Shafi'ee (150/767-204/819) was the founder of one of the famous four schools of fiqh. He grew up in Makkah and by the age of seven he had memorized the Quran. He was the first person to write a treatise on the principles of fiqh. This book was called *al-Risaalah*. He also had a voluminous work on fiqh entitled *al-Umm*. He was a student of Imam Malik and Sufyaan ibn Uyaina, he debated with Muhammad al-Shaibani (the companion of Abu Hanifa) and he was the teacher of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Abdul Rahmaan ibn Mahdi, Abu Thaur and many others.

Shaddaad ibn Aus, Abu Yala [أبو يعلى شداد بن أوس] - see p. 675.

Al-Shanqeeti, Muhammad al-Khadir [محمد الخضر الشنقيطي]: Muhammad al-Khadhir ibn Sayid Abdullah al-Jaknee al-Shanqeeti (d. 1354), originally from Mauritania, learned first from his father who was a well-respected *shaikh*. He fought against the French colonialists who conquered Mauritania. After the French occupation, al-Shanqeeti migrated to Madinah in 1912 C.E. He taught at the Prophet's mosque and he was appointed the Mufti for the Malikis. In 1922 C.E. he left to become a judge in Jordan. After some time, he began to travel in order to spread his knowledge. His commentary on *Sahih al-Bukhaari*, *Kauthar al-Maani al-Daraari fi Kashf Khabaayaa Saheeh al-Bukhaari* is one of the most extensive commentaries available; unfortunately, he was not able to complete that monumental work.

Al-Shaukaani, Muhammad ibn Ali [محمد بن علي الشوكاني]: Muhammad ibn Ali al-Shaukani (1173/1760-1250/1834) was from Yemen. He was a scholar of hadith, fiqh and *tafseer*. His *tafseer* is entitled *Fath al-Qadeer*. He has a classic commentary on legal hadith entitled *Nail al-Autaar*. He was a staunch advocator of *ijtihaad* and vigorously fought against the innovative concept of *taqleed* (blindly following a school of thought). He has written a number of important works besides the ones mentioned above.

Shubah ibn al-Hajaaj [شعبة بن الحجاج]: Shubah ibn al-Hajjaaj ibn al-Warad al-Antaki (82/701-160/776) was an outstanding scholar of hadith in Basrah. He was one of scholars who greatly developed the science of *jarh wa tadeel* (الجرح والتعديل) or the critical evaluation of hadith narrators.

Siddiqi, Abdul Hameed [عبد الحميد صديقي]: Abdul Hameed Siddiqi was a writer from Pakistan who died in the last third of this century. He was a pioneer in the translation of Islamic texts into Arabic. His translation of *Sahih Muslim* has become a standard. He also worked on translating and commenting on the Quran.

Al-Sindi, Muhammad Hayaat [محمد حياة السندي]: Muhammad Hayaat al-Sindi originally came from an area around Hyderabad, India. He moved and lived in Makkah. He spent much of his time studying hadith. One of his students whom he greatly influenced to study hadith was Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhaab, the leader of the Muslim movement in the Najd region. Al-Sindi wrote a small commentary to al-Nawawi's *Forth Hadith.*

Al-Subki, Taqi al-Deen [تقي الدين السبكي]: Taqi al-Deen Ali ibn Abdul Kaafi al-Subki (683/1284-756/1355) was born in Subk, Egypt. He studied in Cairo and became, undoubtedly, the leading Shafi'ee scholar of his time. He wrote a large number of works related mostly to legal theory and fiqh. He is the first one who attempted to complete al-Nawawi's *Majmoo* but he died before completing that work. In 739, he moved to Damascus and worked for years in the judiciary. His son, Taaj al-Deen al-Subki, was also a Shafi'ee scholar of note.

Sufyaan ibn Abdullah [سفيان بن عبد الله] - see p. 825,

Sufyaan al-Thauri [سفيان الثوري]: Abu Abdullah Sufyaan ibn Masrooq al-Thauri (97/716-161/778) was called the "Leader of the Believers" in Hadith. He was born and brought up in Kufah. He refused to accept the post of judge offered by Mansoor. He left Kufah in 144/761 and lived in Makkah and Madinah. Among his books are two collections of hadith, one large and one small. He studied under many of the Followers who had taken their knowledge from the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). He himself had numerous important students, including Abu Hanifah, Malik, al-Auzaai and Yahya ibn Saeed al-Qattaan. In addition to being a great scholar of hadith, he was also recognized for his knowledge of *tafseer*.

Sufyaan ibn Uyainah [سفيان بن عيينة]: Abu Muhammad Sufyan ibn Uyainah ibn Maimoon (107/725-198/814) was born in Kufah but settled in Makkah where he died. A well known transmitter of hadith, he left a collection of hadith, *al-Jaami*.

Sultaan, Naadhim [ناظم سلطان]: Naadhim Sultaan is a contemporary author who lives in Kuwait. He has been the president of the Daar al-Turaath al-Islaami (Daar of Islamic Heritage). He wrote a useful commentary on the *Forty Hadith* of al-Nawawi. He has also written a number of smaller books.

Al-Suyooti, Jalaal al-Deen [جلال الدين السيوطي]: Al-Suyooti (849/1445-911/1505) was one of the most prolific writers in Muslim history. He was a student of ibn Hajr. His work on the sciences of hadith, *Tadreeb al-Raawi* (which is a commentary on al-Nawawi's *Taqreeb*) is one of the major references for that field. He attempted to collect together all of the known hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in a work known as *al-Jaami al-Kabeer*. He made another collection of hadith entitled *al-Jaami al-Sagheer*. He also compiled a *tafseer* entitled *al-Durr al-Manthoor*.

Taawoos [طاووس]: Taawoos was a scholar from the time of the Followers. He narrated hadith from the "four Abdullahs". It is said that he met with fifty of the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). But he spent a great deal of time with ibn Abbas and he learned much of his knowledge of *tafseer* directly from ibn Abbas. It is narrated that ibn Abbas said about him, "I suspect that Taawoos is one of the inhabitants of Paradise." He died in the year 106 A.H.

Al-Tabaraani [الطبراني]: Abu al-Qaasim Sulaimaan ibn Ahmad al-Lakhami al-Tabaraani (260/873-360/971) was born in Palestine. He traveled for many years seeking knowledge and learning hadith from its masters. He literally had hundreds, probably well over a thousand, of teachers who he learned from. After traveling and learning, he lived in Isfahaan, where he taught hadith for over sixty years. One of his collections of hadith, *al-Mujam al-Kabeer*, remains as one of the largest collections of hadith aseembled.

Al-Tabari, Abu Jafar Muhammad ibn Jareer [أبو جعفر محمد بن جرير الطبري]: Al-Tabari (224/839-310/923) was a great historian, an eminent jurist of the rank of *mujtahid*, and an outstanding commentator on the Quran. He was born in Tabaristan and settled in Baghdad where he died. His Quranic commentary, *Jaami' al-Bayan fi Taweel Ayi al-Quran*, is considered by many to be the greatest commentary available that is based on the tradition of the early generations. No less outstanding is his work of history, *Tareekh al-Umum wa-l-Mulook*. He is also the author of *Tahdheeb al-Athaar*, *Ikhtilaaf al-Fuqahaa* and *Adab al-Qudaat*.

Al-Tahaawi, Abu Jafar [أبو جعفر الطحاوي]: Abu Jafar Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Tahaawi (239-321) was born in Taha, a town in Upper Egypt. His father was a scholar of hadith and literature. His mother too was learned. Both of his parents used to attend the lectures of Imam al-Shafi'ee. Abu Ja'ar received his first lessons in hadith from his father. After that, he pursued the study of hadith from his maternal uncle, al-Muzani (d. 264/877), the leading student of Shafi'ee. Later in his life, due to some incidents, al-Tahaawi changed his school from the Shafi'ee school to the Hanafi school. He became one of the leading Hanafi jurists. Most of his writings were in the field of fiqh, such as *Ikhtilaaf al-Fuqahaa*, a book on the difference of opinion among the scholars. However, his important works also include *Sharh Maani al-Athaar* and *Sharh Mushkil al-Athaar*, both primarily explaining the meaning and application of different hadith. He is also famous for a short treatise he wrote on the true creed of the *ahl al-sunnah wa al-jamaah* and of Abu Hanifah and his followers.

Tameem ibn Aus al-Daari [تميم بن أوس الداري]- see pp. 478-479.

al-Tayaalisi, Abu Dawood Sulaimaan [أبو داود سليمان الطيالسي]: Al-Tayaalisi (d. 203/818) was a renowned scholar of hadith, the author of a *Musnad* and other works. He lived in Basra. His teachers included Shubah, Sufyaan al-Thauri and others. Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Ali ibn al-Madeeni and many others were from among his students.

Al-Teebi [الطيبي]: Al-Husain ibn Abdullah al-Teebi (d. 743) hailed from close to Waasit in a province called Khauzistaan. According to ibn Hajr, he was very active in refuting the philosphers and heretics of his time and he demonstrated a strong love for the Book of Allah and the sunnah of His messenger (peace be upon him). He wrote a number of books about the Arabic language, *tafseer* and hadith. He wrote a commentary on *Mishkaat al-Masaabeeh*, published under the title *Sharh al-Teebi ala Mishkaat al-Masaabeeh*.

Al-Tiraiqi, Abdullah [عبد الله الطريقي]: Abdullah al-Tiraiqi is a contemporary scholar hailing from al-Zilfi, Saudi Arabia. He is currently living in Riyadh and teaching at Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University. His specialty is fiqh and his doctoral thesis was a lengthy treatise on the legality of different kinds of foods and meat.

Al-Tirmidhi, Abu Isa [أبو عيسى الترمذي] - see p. 570.

Al-Tustari, Sahl ibn Abdullah [سهل بن عبد الله التستري]: Sahl ibn Abdullah al-Tustari (d. 283/897) was from Tustar in the Persian province of Khawzistan, where he taught Islamic sciences and instructed others in Sufism before he came to Basrah and settled there. He was known for his abstinence and renunciation

Um Salamah [أم سلمة]: "The mother of the believers" Um Salamah Hind bint Abu Umayyah ibn al-Mughirah was one of the earliest Muslims. She migrated to Abyssinia along with her husband Abu Salamah where the latter died. She was later married to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) whom she joined in Madinah in 4 A.H. She died in 59 A.H.

Umar ibn Abdul Azeez [عمر بن عبد العزيز]: Umar ibn Abdul Azeez (61-101) was the great grandson of Umar ibn al-Khattaab on his mother's side and the grandson of the Umayyad *khaleefah* Marwan. Umar ibn Abdul Azeez became the *khaleefah* in the year 99 A.H. He was well respected for his great piety and fear of Allah. When he became *khaleefah*, he tried to redress the wrongs of his predecessors and establish the *khilaafah* on the same standard as that of Abu Bakr and Umar. Some people even call him the fifth of the rightly-guided *khaleefah*s. At the same time, Umar was a *faqeeh* and a man of profound sayings. He greatly influenced the Madinan school of fiqh. He also took an active role in encouraging the Muslim scholars to record the hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) on a widespread basis.

Umar ibn al-Khattaab [عمر بن الخطاب] - see pp. 117-119.

Al-Uqaili, Abu Jafar [أبو جعفر العقيلي]: Abu Jafar Muhammad ibn Amr al-Uqaili (d. 322) was from Makkah. He studied under a number of great hadith scholars, such as ibn Khuzaimah. He wrote a very respected work on weak narrators, entitled *al-Dhuafaa min Rawaat al-Hadeeth*.

Uthmaan ibn Affaan [عثمان بن عفان]: Uthmaan ibn Affaan al-Qurashi (d. 35/656) was born in Makkah some forty-seven years before the date of the Hijrah of the Prophet (peace be upon him). He was one of the earliest people to embrace his Islam and he sacrificed much of his wealth for the sake of the religion. He was always a very close Companion to the Prophet (peace be upon him). He was married to two daughters of the Prophet (peace be upon him), Ruqayya and then, after her death, Umm Kulthoom. He became the third *khaleefah* of Islam, succeeding Umar ibn al-Khattaab by being chosen by the election committee. During his role as *khaleefah*, he did the second collection of the Quran and had copies of the pure text distributed throughout the Muslim world. Unfortunately, he was unfairly accused of supporting members of his clan, the Umayyads. This led to a group of insurgents coming to his home to force him to resign. When he refused, they climbed over the walls of his house and killed him while he was reading the Quran.

Yahya ibn Maeen [يحيى بن معين]: Yahya ibn Maeen (157/775-233/848) was originally from Iraq. He was one of the greatest scholars in hadith and a companion of Ahmad ibn Hanbal.

Zaid ibn Thaabit [زيد بن ثابت]: Zaid ibn Thaabit (d. 45/665) was born in Madinah some eleven years before the event of the Prophet's *hijrah*. However, he was raised in Makkah. He was one of the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) who was assigned the job of recording the revelations of the Quran. Later, he would play an important role during the time of Abu Bakr and during the time of Uthmaan in compiling the complete and authentic Quran. He was greatly respected by the other Companions, in particular, Umar would leave him in charge of Madinah whenever he would have to leave the city.

Al-Zaila'ee [الزيلعي]: Jamaal al-Deen Abdullah ibn Yoosuf al-Zayla'ee (d. 762/1360) was a Hanafi jurist, legal theorist and scholar of hadith. He was born in Zayla' in Somalia and died in Cairo. His *Nasb al-Raayah fi Takhreej Ahaadeeth al-Hidaayah* is a work on the hadith referred to in the famous work of Hanafi fiqh, *al-Hidaayah*.

Al-Zarkashi [الزركشي]: Badr al-Deen Muhammad al-Zarkashi (745/1344-794/1392) was of Turkish background but born in Egypt. He became a leading Shafi'ee scholar as well as a scholar of hadith and Quranic sciences. His work on Quranic sciences, *al-Burhaan fi Uloom al-Quran*, has since been a standard. He has an important work on Shafi'ee legal theory entitled, *al-Bahir al-Muheet*. He also wrote an important treatise on legal maxims from a Shafi'ee perspective, *al-Manthoor fi al-Qawaaid*.

Al-Zuhri, Muhammad ibn Shihaab [محمد بن شهاب الزهري]: Muhammad ibn Muslim ibn Abdullah al-Zuhri (58/678-124/742) was born in Madinah. He was instrumental in developing some of the aspects of the sciences of hadith. He became insistent on the use of the *isnaad* and he began to record hadith in a systematic fashion. He was also a very influential jurist and one of the leaders of the Madinan school of fiqh. His thought greatly influenced Imam Malik. He spent part of his life in Syria and died close to the Hijaz-Palestine border.

Glossary

Abu (أبو) - "father of"; in Arabic, many times the proper form is *Abi* (as in ibn Abi Shaibah), however since that form is unfamiliar to many readers, Abu is used throughout this work.

Adhaan (أذان)- the call to prayer.

Adl (عدل) - justice, righteousness

Ahl al-Hill wa al-Aqd (أهل الحل والعقد) - the most respected and influential people in Islamic society; they have the most important role in determining who is to be the ruler and when should the ruler be removed.

Ahl al-ra`i (أهل الرأي)- this is a term used for those scholars who were more apt to make *ijtihaad* or personal reasoning; many times it is used to refer to the Iraqi/Kuran jurists as a whole.

Ahl al-Suffah (أهل الصفة) - the poor people who used to live in the Prophet's mosque

Ahl al-sunnah wa al-Jamaah (أهل السنة والجماعة) - "The People of the Sunnah and the Congregation," this refers to those people who follow the way of the sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the way of his Companions with respect to beliefs and deeds or a general application of the religion of Islam.

Alaqah (علقة) - "something that clings and adheres," one of the stages that a human goes through in the fetus

Allaahu akbar (الله أكبر) - "Allah is greater (than anything)"

Amal (عمل) - deed, act

Ameer (أمير) - leader; often used for the head or president of a mosque

An (عن) - "on the authority of"

Ansaar (أنصار) - the Muslim residents of Madinah who welcomed their brothers who had emigrated from Makkah to Madinah

Ansaari (أنصاري) - a person from the Ansaar

Aqeeqah (عقيقة) - the sunnah of slaughtering an animal due to the birth of a child

Arafah (عرفة) - This is a place that a person is required to visit as one of the rites of the pilgrimage; it is visited on the 9th day of the month of the pilgrimage.

Arkaan (أركان)- these are pillars or necessary aspects of a particular deed.

Asbaab al-nuzool (أسباب النزول) - circumstances surrounding the revelation of particular verses of the Quran

Asbaab wurood al-hadith (أسباب ورود الحديث) - circumstances surrounding particular speech of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Ashaairah, al- (الأشاعرة) - These are the supposed followers of Abu al-Hasan al-Ashari (260-324 A.H.). This group is known for making *taweel* for many of the attributes of Allah. They also believe that *imaan* is solely *tasdeeq*.

Ashaab al-ra`i (أصحاب الرأي)- this is a term used for those scholars who were more apt to make ijtihaad or personal reasoning; in reality, though, it was used as a general reference for the jurists of Kufah and Iraq or those of the Hanafi school.

Ashari (أشعري) - one who belongs to the *Ashaairah*

Asharites - a common Western term for the *Ashaairah*

Ashoorah (عاشوراء) - the tenth day of the month of Muharram, a day in which Muslims are recommended to fast

Asmaa, al- wa al-sifaat (الأسماء و الصفات) - names and attributes; *al-asmaa* are names and *al-sifaat* are attributes

Asr, al- (العصر)- this is one of the five daily obligatory prayers. This prayer begins at midday and lasts until close to sunset.

Auliyaa (أولياء) - devoted servants, friends, associates; the Sufis use this term in a way similar to the English word, "saint" but that is not its proper sense; plural of *wali*.

Azm, al- (العزم) - determination

Ba al-isti'aanah (باء الاستعانة) - this is the letter *ba* (باء) referring to something used as an aid or assisting in some action, as in the statement, "Actions are done with the help of intention."

Ba al-musaahibah (باء المصاحبة) - this is the letter *ba* (باء) being used to imply that one thing accompanies the next, as in the statement, "Actions are accompanied by intention."

Ba al-sababiya (باء السببية) - this is the letter *ba* (باء) being used to indicated that one thing causes the other, as in the statement, "Actions are the result of intention."

Badr (بدر) - the sight of the first major battle between the Prophet's followers and the Quraish. Those Companions who participated in that battle are especially distinguished because the Muslims were a very small number and the going to that battle was not considered an obligatory act.

Barakah (بركة) - blessings

Bayyinah (بيّنة) - conclusive proof, evidence

Bidah (بدعة) - innovation, heresy

Birr, al- (البر) - this word means either righteousness or good, proper conduct

Burhaan (برهان) - proof

Dalaalah al-nass (دلالة النص) - argument *a fortiori*; arguing from an agreed upon proposition to a more evident one.

Dawah (دعوة) - propagating Islam, calling others to the religion of Islam

Deen (دين) - complete way of life, religion

Dhaabit fiqhi (ضابط فقهي) - a principle that applies throughout one specific area of fiqh, such as the are of physical purity, as opposed to a *qaaidah fiqhiyah* that applies to numerous different fields of fiqh.

Dhaahiris - people who follow the literal meaning of the texts and refuse to go beyond that literal meaning; in Arabic, they are known as *al-Dhaahiriyyah* (الظاهرية)

Dhaeef (ضعيف) - weak, as in a weak hadith

Dhalaalah (ضلالة) - misguidance, straying from the straight path

Dhanni (ظني) - speculative, probable; the opposite of *qati'ee* which implies definitive, certain.

Dharar (ضرر) - harm, the opposite of what is beneficial

Dhikr (ذكر) - words of remembrance of Allah

Dhiyaa` (ضياء) - illumination

Dhuha, al- (الضحى)- this is forenoon time in which it is sunnah to perform voluntary prayers.

Dhuhr, al- (الظهر)- this is one of the five obligatory daily prayers. The time for this prayer begins after high noon.

Dhu-l-Hijjah (ذو الحجة) - the twelfth month of the Islamic calendar; it is the month in which the pilgrimage is performed; the ninth day of this month is known as the Day of Arafah; the tenth day is the day of Eid al-Adha

Dhulm (ظلم) - wrongdoing

Dinaar (دينار)- this is a gold coin used during the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and afterwards; the common English spelling for the word is dinar.

Dua (دعاء) - supplication, informal prayer

Dunya (دنيا) - this worldly life

Eenah, al- (العينة) - this is a type of business deal that implicitly involves interest (*riba*) although outwardly it seems to be void of it.

Eid (عيد)- these are the Islamic festivals or holidays. One occurs after the fast of the month of Ramadhaan is completed and the other occurs after the completion of the pilgrimage.

Faasid (فاسد) - defective, improper, not valid

Faasiq (فاسق) - evildoer, unrighteous person

Fajr, al- (الفجر)- this is one of the five obligatory daily prayers. The time for this prayer is between dawn and sunrise.

Faqeeh (فقيه) - jurist; one specialized in the field of *fiqh*

Fardh ain (فرض عين) - an obligation upon each and every individual, except for those specifically excused for particular reasons.

Fardh kifaayah (فرض كفاية) - an obligation upon the community as a whole, such that if one portion of the community completely performs the deed, the rest of the community is resolved of any responsibility or need to perform that act.

Fatwa (فتوي) - ruling given by a scholar concerning a religious matter, usually based on *ijtihaad*

Fiqh (فقه) - jurisprudence, law

Firdaus, al- (الفردوس) - Paradise

Fitnah (فتنة) - trial, temptation

Furoo, al- (الفروع) - this word has various meanings, dependent on the context; in general, it means the secondary issues, as opposed to the fundamental issues known as *al-usool*. Sometimes it refers to legal matters while the *usool* would then be matters of belief.

Ghaib, al- (الغيب) - the unseen, unwitnessed

Ghareeb (غريب) - lit., something strange; in hadith terminology, it refers to hadith which come through only one source; when al-Tirmidhi called a hadith *ghareeb*, it usually meant that the hadith was weak.

Ghusl (غسل) - the complete washing, required, for example, due to sexual defilement

Ghura (غرة) - blood money to be paid in the case of causing another's death

Haafidh (حافظ) - a great scholar, preserver of knowledge

Habeeb (حبيب) - beloved

Hajj (حج) - the pilgrimage to Makkah that one must perform once in one's life if one has the means to do so.

Hajr (هجر) - boycotting another person

Halaal (حلال) - permissible; opposite of *haraam*

Hamd, al- (الحمد) - praise and gratitude

Hamm (همّ) - consider or decide upon something

Hamdulilaah, al- (الحمد لله) - all praises are to Allah.

Haqeeqi (حقيقي) - literal speech

Haraam (حرام), commonly *haram* - forbidden; opposite of *halaal.*

Hasad (حسد) - envy, jealousy

Hasan (حسن)- this is a verified hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) although it is not as strong as *sahih.*

Hasan lidhaatihi (حسن لذاته) - this is a hadith that reaches the level of *hasan* on its own merit, without the need for any corroborating evidence.

Hasan lighairihi (حسن لغيره) - this is a hadith that has been raised to the level of *hasan* due to corroborating or supporting evidence.

Hijaab (حجاب) - the prescribed woman's dress

Hayaa` (حياء) - modesty, shyness, bashfulness

Hijrah (هجرة) - lit., "emigration, migration," when used in the expression, "Year of the *hijrah*," it is a reference to the Prophet's (peace be upon him) migration from Makkah to Madinah that marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar; it also refers to boycotting or avoiding one another.

Hikmah (حكمة) - literally, wisdom; in numerous verses in the Quran, it is in specific reference to the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)

Hoor al-ain, al- (الحور العين) - the special spouses that one will be blessed with in Paradise.

Hudood, al- (الحدود) - the prescribed legal punishments for specific crimes.

Hulqoom, al- (الحلقوم) - the windpipe

Ibaadah (عبادة) - "worship," in the Islamic sense, it includes more than the ritual acts but all acts done for the sake of Allah can be considered acts of worship.

Ibn (ابن) - "son of"

Idhmaar (إضمار) - "suppression" or "ellipsis." This is where something is left intentionally unstated but its meaning can be assumed or understood.

Idraaj (إدراج) - the inadvertent inclusion of words while narrating or recording a hadith, such words do not form part of the hadith but may mistakenly be passed on by other's as part of the hadith.

Ihsaan (إحسان) - as discussed in the text, the general meaning is the doing of goodness; the particular meaning is to worship Allah as if one is seeing Him or, at least, to know that He is watching.

Ijtihaad (اجتهاد) - the use of personal reasoning to determine what is correct from the *shareeah*'s point of view.

Ikhlaas, al- (الإخلاص) - pure sincerity in one's intentions and deeds.

Ikraah (إكراه) - coercion, duress

Ilaah (إله) - god, worshipped one, adored one

Illah (علة) - in hadith terminology, this refers to an obscure, damaging defect that makes the narration unacceptable; in fiqh and Islamic legal theory, it is the effective legal cause behind a specific command or prohibition, such as the fact that alcohol causes intoxication is the legal cause for the prohibition of alcohol.

Ilhaam (إلهام) - knowledge being put into one's heart; a kind of inspiration or revelation from Allah; mostly emphasized by Sufis

Ilm al-kalaam (علم الكلام) - scholastic theology

Iltizaam (التزام) - strict adherence

Imaam (إمام) - leader in prayer, general leader, scholar

Imaan (إيمان) - this is "faith," which has its own *shareeah* definition as explained in the text.

Imaan al-Mujmal, al- (الإيمان المجمل) - the general or unspecified faith wherein the person has not reached the level of deserving the honorific title of "believer".

Innamaa (إنما) a term implying both emphasis and exclusiveness.

Inqiyaad (انقياد) - submission, yielding

Iqaamat al-salaat (إقامة الصلاة)- this is the "establishing of the prayer," implying performing it properly according to all of the commands of the *shareeah*.

Iraada, al- (الإرادة) - volition

Islaam, Islam (إسلام) - this implies submission, such as submission to Allah; it is also the word for the religion as a whole.

Isnaad (إسناد) - chain of narrators for a hadith

Israaeeliyaat (إسرائيليات) - these are the stories and narrations that have their origin in the books or legends of the Jews and Christians.

Istighfaar (استغفار) - seeking forgiveness from Allah.

Istihsaan (استحسان) - a method of exercising personal opinion in order to avoid any rigidity and unfairness that might result from the literal enforcement of the law; juristic preference.

Istiqaamah, al- (الاستقامة) - remaining steadfast along the straight fast.

Itikaaf (اعتكاف) - to seclude oneself in the mosque for the purpose of worship.

Ithm (إثم) - sin

Jaahiliyyah, al- (الجاهلية) - the period or time of ignorance; in particular, it refers to the time before the coming of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), however it can be used for any time that shares the same essential characteristics of ignorance or negligence of God's laws.

Jaaizah (جائزة) - with respect to one's visiting guest, it is where the guest should be given the best type of food on the first day and night and then after that he eats what the host would usually eat.

Jahmites - a common Western term for the *Jahmiyyah*

Jahmiyyah, al- (الجهمية) - the followers of Jahm ibn Safwaan, who was killed for his beliefs by the Muslim ruler. He virtually denied all of Allah's attributes. He claimed that *imaan* is simply a matter of having knowledge that Allah exists.

Jibreel (جبريل) - the Angel Gabriel

Jihad (جهاد) - to exert oneself, strive, struggle; in particular in fiqh, it refers to fighting against the unbelievers in order to spread the word of Allah.

Jizyah (جزية) - this is the tax that non-Muslim citizens of the Islamic state must pay in lieu of military service.

Kaabah (كعبة) - the House of Allah in Makkah to which the Hajj is made.

Kaafir (كافر) - a disbeliever

Karramites - common Western term for the *Karraamiyyah*

Karramiyyah, al- (الكرامية) - This heretical group, which have very little influence in the history of Islam, claimed that *imaan* is simply a statement of the tongue.

Kashf (كشف) - "spiritual unveiling," where truths are mystically revealed to one's heart; mostly emphasized by Sufis

Kataba (كتب)- literally, this means "he recorded," however it is often used in the Quran and hadith to mean, in reference to Allah, "He ordered, prescribed."

Khaleefah (خليفة) - the leader of the Muslim nation, often referred to as "caliph" in English

Khaleel (خليل) - beloved and intimate friend

Khalq, al- (الخلق) - the creation

Kharijites - a common Western term for the *Khawaarij*

Khata (خطأ) - mistake

Khawaarij, al- (الخوارج) - one of the first heretical groups in the history of Islam. Known for their extremist views, they even declared the caliphs Uthman and Ali disbelievers. They believed that anyone who commits a major sin falls out of the fold of Islam. The Prophet (peace be upon him) prophesized their coming and stated that they should be fought.

Khuluq, al- (الخلق) - behaviors, manners

Khushu' (خشوع) - lowering, humbling and submitting oneself

Khutbah (خطبة) - address, speech; in particular, the speech given by the Imam at the Friday Prayer is called a *khutbah*

Khutbah al-haajah (خطبة الحاجة) - these are the words with which the Prophet (peace be upon him) would commonly begin his speeches.

Kibr (كبر) - pride, arrogance

Kufr (كفر) - disbelief, the opposite of *imaan.*

Kunya (كنية) - this is a common name by which people are referred; it is of the form, "father of," or "mother of," such as, "father of Muhammad."

Kurbah (كربة) - anything which distresses the soul

La ilaaha illa-llah (لا إله إلا الله) - "There is none worthy of worship except Allah"

Lailat al-Qadar (ليلة القدر) - "the Night of Decree"

Maasiyah (معصية) - a sinful act

Maaturidiyyah, al- (الماتريدية) - The followers of Abu Mansur al-Maturidi (d. 333 A.H.). This group is very close to the Ashaariyyah in their beliefs.

Madhhab (مذهب)- basically this refers to a person's school of thought or opinion.

Mafhoom al-mukhalafah (مفهوم المخالفة)- argument *a contrario*; the divergent meaning. This is where one meaning is understood from a text while, at the same time, one concludes that the opposite ruling applies for the case opposite that stated in the text.

Mafhoom al-muwaafiqah (مفهوم الموافقة) - argument *a fortiori*; arguing from an agreed upon proposition to a more evident one.

Maghrib, al- (المغرب)- this is one of the five daily obligatory prayers. It begins just after sunset.

Mahram (محرم) - herein, it is a reference to a woman's male relative who is in the prohibited degrees for marriage.

Majaazi (مجازي) - figurative speech

Majhool (مجهول)- in hadith sciences, this refers to a narrator who is unknown. His hadith cannot be accepted on their own because his quality as a narrator is not established.

Majhool al-haal (مجهول الحال) - in hadith terminology, this refers to a narrator who is known and identified, however, the status or quality of his hadith narrations are not known.

Makrooh (مكروه) - disliked or reprehensible act

Makroohaat (مكروهات) - plural of *makrooh*

Maqbool (مقبول) - literally, "accepted, acceptable"; while speaking about narrators of hadith, this was a term particularly used by ibn Hajr and meaning the person's hadith are acceptable only if supported by corroborating evidence.

Maree, al- (المريء) - the esophagus

Marfoo (مرفوع)- this is a report or statement that is traced all the way back to the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Marifah (معرفة) - knowledge of something

Maroof (معروف) - what is good, approved by the *shareeah*

Maturidites - a common Western term for the *Maaturidiyyah*

Mauidhah (موعظة) - admonition

Mauqoof (موقوف)- this is a report or statement that is traced back to the Companions.

Milk (ملك) - dominion

Minbar (منبر) - "pulpit"

Mualaq (معلق)- this is where the compiler of a collection of hadith does not record the entire chain of the hadith.

Muamalaat (معاملات) - worldly transactions, as opposed to ritual acts of worship

Muanan (معنعن)- in the sciences of hadith, this is where a narrator simply says, "On the authority of," instead of stating exactly how he heard the hadith.

Mubaah (مباح) - a permissible act

Mudaa alaih, al- (المدعى عليه) - the defendant

Muddaee, al- (المدّعي) - the plaintiff

Mubtadi (مبتدع) - one who willingly follows a *bidah* (heresy, innovation)

Mudhghah (مضغة) - "a lump that looks like it has been chewed," one of the stages that a human goes through in the fetus

Mufti (مفتي) - one who issues *fatwa*s

Muhaddith (محدث) - one specialized in the field of hadith

Muhsin (محسن) - a doer of good, a person characterized with *ihsaan*

Muhsineen (محسنين) - plural of *muhsin*

Mujaahid (مجاهد) - one who makes jihad

Mujtahid (مجتهد) - one who exercises *ijtihaad* or personal, scholarly reasoning

Mujmal (مجمل) - left without details, general, ambiguous

Mukrah, al- (المكرَه) - the one who is being coerced

Mukrah alaih, al- (المكره عليه) - the act one is being coerced to perform

Mukrih al- (المكرِه) - the person who coerces another person to do something.

Mumin (مؤمن) - a believer

Mumineen (مؤمنين) - plural of *mumin*

Munkar (منكر) - what is evil and opposed by the *shareeah*; in hadith terminology, a rejected, very weak hadith in which an unacceptable narrator relates something that contradicts what the acceptable sources state.

Munqata (منقطع) - in hadith terminology, a hadith whose chain has missing or broken links.

Muraaqibah, al- (المراقبة) - the feeling of being watched by Allah in all of one's acts.

Murjiah, al- (المرجئة) - an early sect in the history of Islam and an opponent to the Khawaarij; they went to the opposite extreme concerning *imaan* and claimed that even the biggest sinner is a complete and perfect believer.

Murjiites - A common Western term for the *Murjiah*

Mursal (مرسل)- this is the "strongest" type of weak hadith in which only the name of the Companion who originally narrated the hadith is missing from the chain.

Mushaahadah, al- (المشاهدة) - personal witnessing, as in the case where the person feels he is actually seeing Allah in front of him while performing acts of worship.

Mushrik (مشرك) - those who commit *shirk* (associate partners with Allah)

Mushrikeen (مشركين) - plural of *mushrik*

Muslim (مسلم) - one who submits

Musnad (مسند) - a collection of hadith arranged not according to fiqh topic but according to the Companion who narrated the hadith; a second meaning for the term is a hadith that has an unbroken chain that goes all the way back to the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Mustahab (مستحب) - a preferred or recommended act.

Muta'asib (متعصب) - one who blindly and rigidly follows a school of *fiqh*, regardless of the evidences presented against their view

Mutafiqun alaih (متفق عليه) - "agreed upon," in particular, it is in reference to a hadith that is recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim; all acceptable scholars "are agreed" that such a hadith is authentic.

Mutah (متعة) - temporary marriage; it is considered prohibited by all Sunni scholars.

Mutakallimoon (متكلمون) - with respect to the scholars of Islamic legal theory, this is in reference to the Shafi'ees, Hanbalis and Malikis. This is because they started their approach from a theoretical point of view as opposed to the Hanafis, who are known as the *fuqahaa* or jurists because they started their approach to legal theory with the practical fiqh conclusions.

Mutashaabihaat (متشابهات) - doubtful matters

Mutawaatir (متواتر) - something narrated in such a way, such as by so many people in each generation, that there is no question about its correctness and authenticity

Mutazilah, al- (المعتزلة) - an early heretical group in the history of Islam. They were greatly responsible for the spread of Greek thinking among the Muslims. Among their beliefs was that the *faasiq* was neither a believer nor a disbeliever but he would be in the Hell-fire forever.

Muttaqeen (متقين) - people who possess *taqwa* or God-consciousness, fear of Allah and so forth

Muttaqi (متقي) - singular of *muttaqeen.*

Muzdalifah (مزدلفة) - this is a place that a person is required to visit and stay at during the pilgrimage.

Nafs (نفس) - soul, person

Najash, al- (النجش) - artificially raising prices against one another simply for the purpose of harming others.

Nakirah (نكرة) - grammatical term meaning indefinite noun.

Nameemah, al- (النميمة) - the spreading of information about others in order to cause harm or injury

Naseehah (نصيحة) - sincere conduct, sincere advice

Nifaaq (نفاق) - hypocrisy

Nisf (نصف) - half of something

Nisyaan, al- (النسيان) - forgetfulness

Niyyah (نية) - intention

Noor (نور) - a light

Nushooz (نشوز) - marital discord wherein one of the partners violates the rights of the other marriage partner

Nutfah (نطفة) - "a drop of fluid," one of the stages that a human goes through in the fetus

Orientalists - non-Muslims who study or write about Islam

Qaadhi al-Qudha (قاضي القضاة) - the chief justice

Qaaidah fiqhiyah (قاعدة فقهية) - a fiqh maxim or general principle that has applications that span a number of different fiqh areas

Qabool, al- (القبول) - acceptance, as in accepting whatever the *shahaadah* implies.

Qadar, al- (القدر) - Divine decree and preordainment

Qadariyyah, al- (القدرية) - the sect that denies the concept of *al-qadar*

Qalb (قلب) - heart

Qaraain (قرائن) - circumstantial and indirect evidence

Qasd, al- (القصد) - purpose, intent

Qati'ee (قطعي) - definitive, certain; as opposed to *dhanni* which implies speculative or probable

Qati'ee al-thaboot (قطعي الثبوت) - definitively confirmed, no question for any doubt about it.

Qawl or *qaul* (قول) - "statement," the scholars discuss statements of the heart (beliefs) as well as statements of the tongue

Qiblah (قبلة) - the direction faced during the prayer, the direction of Makkah

Qiyaas (قياس) - analogy

Qiyaas faasid (قياس فاسد) - an illogical or improper use of analogy.

Qiyaas al-aks (قياس العكس) - the opposite of the conclusion of an analogy for an opposite case.

Qudsi (قدسي) - herein, it is used to refer to a hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) transmits Allah's own words.

Rabb (رب) - Lord, creator, one who nourishes and sustains

Rahim (رحم) - womb

Rai (رأي) - personal opinion

Rakat (ركعة), also commonly *rakah* - a "unit" or portion of the ritual prayer or *salaat*

Riba (ربا) - interest

Riyaa (رياء) - acting for the sake of show or to be seen by others.

Rooh, al- (الروح) - the spirit, as in the spirit that is breathed into a fetus and gives it life.

Rububiyyah, al- (الربوبية) - Related to the *rabb* (lord and creator)

Rukhsah (رخصة) - exemption or permission from the *shareeah* to do something that is, under ordinary circumstances, not to be done.

Sa (صاع) - this is a physical quantity of something; it is equivalent to an average sized man putting his two hands together and four times scooping up the quantity of something.

Sabr (صبر) - patience, perseverance

Sadaqa (صدقة) - charity, usually used for charity other than the obligatory zakah but sometimes it does mean the obligatory alms or *zakat*.

Sadd al-dharai (سد الذرائع) - "blocking the means," this is a concept in Islamic fiqh where if it is found that an act leads to something unlawful, the preliminary act would also be considered unlawful

Sadooq (صدوق) - honest, a middle level, acceptable narrator

Sahih (صحيح)- this is an authentic or verified hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Sahih al-Bukhari (صحيح البخاري) - the most authentic compilation of hadith; compiled by Imam al-Bukhari.

Sahih lidhaatihi (صحيح لذاته) - this is a hadith that reaches the level of *sahih* on its own merit, without the need for any corroborating evidence.

Sahih lighairihi (صحيح لغيره) - this is a hadith that has been raised to the level of *sahih* due to corroborating or supporting evidence.

Sahih Muslim (صحيح مسلم) - the second most authentic compilation of hadith; compiled by Imam Muslim.

Salaat (صلاة), also commonly *salat* - the Islamic ritual prayer; literally, it means supplication.

Salaat al-Tasbeeh (صلاة التسبيح) - This is a special prayer in which certain words of *dhikr* are repeated a number of times in each of the different movements of the prayer.

Salaf, al- (السلف) - the first three generation of Muslims, in particular, the Companions, and those who follow their path

Salafi (سلفي) - one adhering to the way of the *salaf*

Sami'iyyah attributes (سمعية) - These are the "attributes of Allah known through transmitted reports" and they cannot be "proven" *a priori* logically or rationally.

Shaadh (شاذ) - in hadith terminology, this refers to a hadith that is deemed weak because it is in open contradiction to what is narrated or reported through stronger sources or evidence.

Shaam, al- (الشام) - "Greater Syria," encompassing most of what is today Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan

Shabaab (شباب) - youth

Shabaan (شعبان) - the eighth month of the Islamic calendar

Shahaadah (شهادة) - "testimony," herein it refers to the testimony of faith, "I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah."

Shaikh (شيخ) - religious leader, scholar or respected person, also used for Sufi leaders

Shareeah (شريعة)- Islamic law.

Sharr (شر) - evil

Shart (شرط) - condition, prerequisite

Shawaal (شوال) - the tenth month of the Islamic calendar

Shiah (شيعة) - a sectarian group founded years after the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him); they claim that Ali ibn Abu Taalib should have been the first caliph instead of Abu Bakr; and they claim to be the followers of the descendants of Ali

Shirk (شرك)- the associating of partners with Allah.

Shukr, al- (الشكر) - giving thanks

Sidq, al- (الصدق) - sincerity, the opposite of lying, falsehood and hypocrisy.

Siqt, al- (السقط) - the aborted fetus or miscarried child

Siyaam (صيام) - fast

Soorah (سورة), also commonly *Surah* - a "chapter" of the Quran

Subhaanallah (سبحان الله)- "how exalted and great is Allah above any form of imperfection or fault"

Sufis - these are the groups among Muslims that emphasize mystical practices, remembrance of Allah and other aspects.

Sulaama (سلامى) - the small bones in the hands and feet

Sunnah (سنة) - practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Sunnah mu`akadah (سنة مؤكدة)- this is a stressed sunnah or a practice whose performance, although falling short of being obligatory, is greatly stressed.

Sunan (سنن) - plural of *sunnah*; it is also a term used for a collection of hadith that is arranged according to fiqh topic and whose main concern is fiqh matters and not matters of belief.

Surah (سورة)- this is a "chapter" from the Quran.

Surah al-Faatiha (سورة الفاتحة) - This is the opening chapter of the Quran.

Taaghoot (طاغوت) - false god or false object of worship

Tadlees (التدليس)- lit., deception; with respect to hadith sciences, it has many variations. One of the most common is where Mr. A will say, "On the authority of Mr. X," while, although Mr. A had heard hadith directly from Mr. X, he did not hear that particular hadith directly from Mr. X but through some intermediary source. If a narrator is known for committing frequent *tadlees*, his narration will not be accepted unless he explicitly shows that he heard the hadith directly from the one on whose authority he is narrating it. If he uses a vague term, such as *an* ("on the authority of"), his narration will not be accepted.

Tadlees al-taswiyah (تدليس التسوية) - this is one of the worst forms of *tadlees*; here, the person drops a weak narrator from further up in the chain and replaces his name with the word *an* ("on the authority of"). If someone does not spot this deception, he may believe that the chain is acceptable.

Tafseer (تفسير) - Quranic commentary and exegesis.

Tafweedh (تفويض) - recording the text, such as a verse of the Quran, as it is and then stating that the meaning of the word is known only to Allah and has no understandable meaning to humans.

Tahaarah (طهارة) - purity

Tahleelah (تهليلة) - the saying, "There is none worthy of worship except Allah" (*laa ilaaha illa-llaah*).

Tahmeedah (تحميدة) - the saying, "All praises are for Allah" (*al-hamdulilaah*)

Takbeer (تكبير)- this is the saying of "Allahu Akbar," "Allah is greater."

Takbeerah (تكبيرة) - saying, "Allahu akbar," one time

Takhreej (تخريج) - this is the study of the source works in which a hadith can be found as well as a discussion of its chain of narrators and the grading of the hadith itself.

Taqdeer (تقدير) - the assuming of words in a sentence that the speaker intentionally left unstated.

Taqwa (تقوى) - the fear of Allah, being mindful of Allah, God-consciousness

Tasurrufaat (تصرفات) - dispositions, usufruct dealings, such as sales contracts, leasing contracts, marriage contracts, divorce and so forth

Tasbeehah (تسبيحة) - the statement, *subhaanallah.*

Tasdeeq (تصديق) - affirmation, belief

Tasleem (تسليم) - the saying of, *assalaam alaikum*; in particular, it is the saying of that statement to signify the finishing of the prayer.

Taubah (توبة), commonly also *tawbah* - repentance

Tauheed, al- (also, *tawheed*, *tawhid*, *tauhid*) (التوحيد) - Islamic monotheism

Tauheed al-Asmaa wa al-Sifaat (توحيد الأسماء والصفات) - *tauheed* of Allah with respect to His names and attributes; He is the only one who possesses His perfect, complete and majestic attributes.

Tauheed al-Ruboobiyah (توحيد الربوبية) - the *tauheed* of Allah with respect to His Lordship and His actions, such as He is the only creator, the only sustainer, the only one who maintains and nourishes the creation and so forth.

Tauheed al-Uloohiyah (توحيد الألوهية) - the *tauheed* of Allah with respect to His Godhood; in other words, He is the only God and the only one worthy of worship and, hence, He is the only one that a person should take as his God and object of worship.

Taweel (تأويل)- this is the reinterpretation of a text when one claims that its literal meaning is not what is meant; it was resorted to by later scholars to deny some of the attributes of Allah as mentioned in the Quran and sunnah.

Tayammum (تيمم) - this is the ritual washing with soil when, for example, water is not available to make ablution.

Tazeer, al- (التعزير) - discretionary punishments determined by the judge for those offenses that do not have a prescribed (*hudood*) punishment.

Tazkiyyah (تزكية) - process of purification of the soul

Thayyib (ثيب) - someone who has had legal sexual intercourse even if at the present time he is not married, such as a widower or a divorced man.

Thiqa or *thiqah* (ثقة) - a trustworthy narrator

Uff (أف) - a slight word of rebuke

Uluhiyyah (ألوهية) - related to the *ilaah* (God, worshipped one)

Umm al-Kitaab (أم الكتاب) - literally, "the foundation or mother of the book," it is in reference to *Surah al-Faatiha*

Ummah (أمة) - "nation, people," it refers either to the Muslim nation or the people who have been addressed by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), which would be all of mankind from his time until the day of Judgment.

Umoom al-muqtadha (عموم المقتضى) - the generality of the assumed, missing word; when a sentence requires the assumption of certain unstated words in order for the sentence to be considered meaningful, this is the process of assuming as much as one can logically assume; those who do not approve of this concept say the one must assume as little as possible as long as the sentence will make sense.

Umrah (عمرة) - the "lesser pilgrimage" that contains less rites than Hajj and may be performed throughout the year.

Usool, al- (الأصول) - this word has various meanings, dependent on the context; in general, it means the fundamental issues, as opposed to the secondary issues known as *furoo*. Sometimes it refers to matters of belief while the *furoo* would then be legal matters.

Waajib (واجب)- usually used to mean a mandatory or obligatory act.

Wahdat al-wujood (وحدة الوجود) - pantheism; monism; the deviant belief that everything is one and that one is God.

Wajdain, al- (الودجين) - the two external jugular veins

Wali (ولي) - a *wali* of Allah is a devoted servant of Allah; singular of *auliyaa*

Waqaayah (وقاية) - "to protect," this is the root of the word *taqwa*

Wara' (ورع) - fear of Allah, great concern as to how one acts with respect to Allah

Witr (وتر) - this is a late-night ritual prayer that consists of an odd number of *rakat*s

Wudhu (وضوء) - ablution, the ritual washing before the ritual prayers.

Yaqeen, al- (اليقين) - certainty, free of any doubt

Zaani (زاني) - a man who commits *zina* (illegal sexual intercourse).

Zandiqah (زندقة) - a hypocrite who is openly showing Islam but is secretly working against Islam.

Zakat (زكاة) - one of the five pillars of Islam; it is the portion of one's wealth that one must give away for the sake of Allah to certain people as specified in the Quran.

Zina (زنا) - illegal sexual intercourse; fornication

Zindeeq (زنديق) - same as *zandiqah*

Ziyaadat-ul-thiqa (زيادة الثقة) - additions to a narration that are narrated by a trustworthy narrator

Zuhd (زهد) - Islamic asceticism; it does not mean not working in this world but it means having one's heart attached to the Hereafter instead of to this world.

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